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ABSTRACT

This study, third in a series of seven, was written by two kindergarten teachers in different schools. A description is given of the two schools, the community in which they are located, and the physical layout of each of the teachers' classrooms. The characteristics of the teachers and their pupils are described as are the types of distractions encountered by the teachers in daily interaction with students. A discussion is presented on coping techniques used and their comparative effectiveness. Appended are lists of common distractions, classification of coping techniques, a quantitative checklist, and a teacher's daily response form. (JD)

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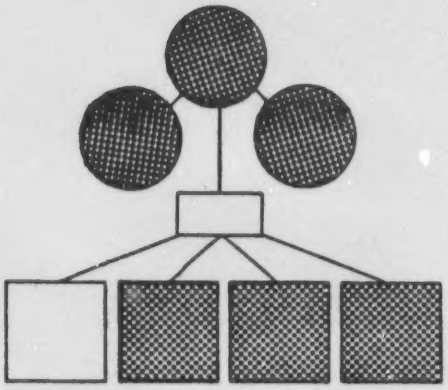

COPING WITH CLASSROOM DISTRACTIONS

TEACHER CASE STUDY

Teachers A & W Perspective
Kindergarten Classrooms

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Report IR&DT 79-3

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This study was prepared and written by the San Diego IR&DT team. No authorship is claimed by FWL.

MAR 7 1980

PREFACE

This study was written by two kindergarten teachers, Teachers A and W. Teacher A was involved with the study from its onset in September of 1977. Teacher A, along with three other teachers, a researcher, and a trainer-developer, assisted in determining the topic to be researched. Teacher A also helped to write the research design. Both Teacher A's and W's classrooms were used for data collection.

Teachers A and W did the analysis of the data and wrote the analysis findings for the study in the third person. Due to time and financial constraints, Teacher A did a larger proportion of the writing. Both teachers were concerned that the study be objective, interesting to read, and relevant to the reader. They consulted with the classroom observers who collected data in their rooms to insure objectivity, particularly in the description of their teaching styles. When interpreting the data, the teachers again consulted with the observers, who were able to provide valuable insights during both the analysis and writing stages of the study.

Involvement with this study was challenging for Teachers A and W. Both felt privileged to be part of one of the first studies that lets teachers decide the subject to be researched and to write the research design. They were also actively involved in data collection and analysis, and, finally, assisted in writing the study.

Teachers A and W wish to thank Dr. William Tikunoff and Dr. Beatrice Ward of Far West Laboratory for their technical assistance. Both teachers wish to thank their researcher, Grant Behnke, and trainer-developer, Dave Mittleholtz, whose expertise guided them in their study. Thanks also to the writers, Cy Perkins and Bette Pegas, who made their awkward words read smoothly. And, of course, thanks to the nonparticipant observers, Betty Miller and Leslie Ima, who collected data and gave invaluable insights during analysis and writing.

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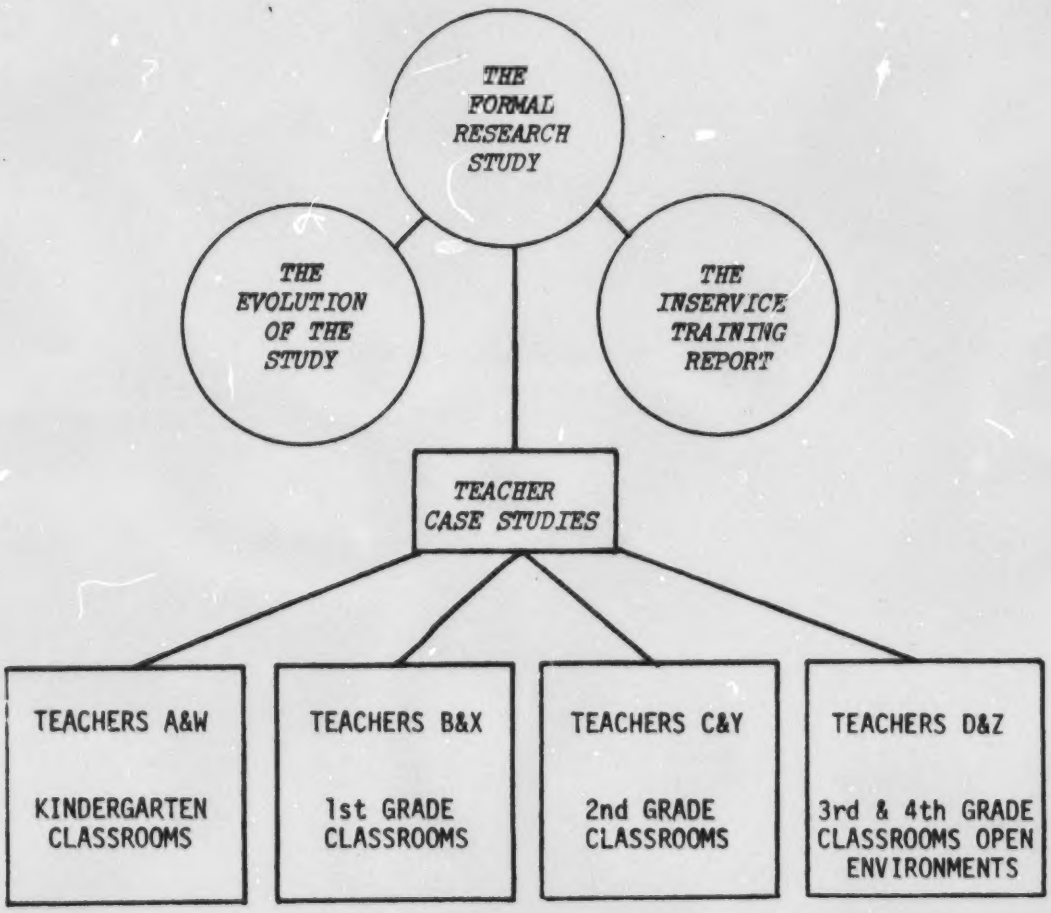
INTRODUCTION

PERSPECTIVE OF THIS STUDY

The case study which follows is one of a set of studies describing research conducted by the San Diego Interactive Research & Development on Teaching Team (IR & DT). The cluster of studies which presents the IR & DT team's findings regarding *Coping with Classroom Distractions* is graphically illustrated below.



The Formal Research Study provides a formal presentation of a typical research report (i.e., purpose of study, review of literature, methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations).

The Evolution of the Study provides a chronological development of the evolution of the study from the initial identification of the problem to the write-ups of the findings (from the IR & DT team's perspective).

The Inservice Training Report details the activities undertaken in an inservice class offered by the trainer/developer and a preliminary evaluation of the impact of the class upon the participants.

The Teacher Case Studies (4) provide discussions of findings, conclusions, and insights from the perspective of the teachers who participated in the study. Detailed context descriptions of the instructional environments and teaching styles should permit readers to identify those teacher case studies which seem most relevant.

This cluster approach to presenting information should permit the reader to peruse those studies which he/she determines are most relevant. Hence, the disparate needs and interests of a variety of readers will be satisfied.

In an attempt to minimize the redundancy of desribing certain procedures, most operational activities (e.g., the selection and training of the classroom observers) and methodological procedures (e.g., data collection methods) have been omitted or described briefly in this document. The reader seeking detailed descriptions of the study's methodology should review *The Formal Research Study* or *The Evolution of the Study* documents. For the reader planning to read only this case study, a brief overview of IR & DT, the general context of the study, the question identified for study, and the data collection procedures are provided below.

OVERVIEW

In the first newsletter describing* the existence of two IR & DT studies, the following description was provided:

> Interactive Research and Development on Teaching (IR & DT) is an R & D strategy that places teachers, researchers, and trainer/developers together to inquire as a team into those questions, problems, and concerns of the classroom teacher. Decisions are made collaboratively regarding research issues and strategies and the concurrent development of training that grows from the research. Each member of an IR & DT team has parity and shares equal responsibility for decisions made by the team, from identification of the question/problem to the completion of all resultant R & D activities.

The members of the IR & DT team conducting this study were all employees of the San Diego Unified School District. The original team was comprised of four elementary school teachers, a researcher, and a trainer/developer. Three of the teachers were colleagues at a relatively small K-6 school with a faculty of 15. They taught in Grades K, 1, and 2. The school's student population was approximately 400; 75 percent Black, 20 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 2 percent White. Thirty-two of these children were involved in the English as a Second Language Program (ESL), and over 85 percent of the school's children were eligible for a federally funded free-lunch program. The fourth teacher, who team-taught a third-fourth grade class of 60 students, was on the staff of a very large K-6 school (40 teachers) located in a suburban middle-class area. The student population was 1,200; 77 percent White, 11 percent Hispanic, 9 percent Asian, and 3 percent Black.

The researcher was recruited from the evaluation services office of

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* *Interactive Research & Development on Teacher*, Far West Laboratory, San Francisco, Volume 1, Number 1, October 1977.

the school district and he had previously been involved in conducting evaluations of various state and federally funded programs. The trainer/developer previously was attached to the district's staff development office as a resource teacher providing inservice eudcation to teachers. The six members of the IR & DT were recruited by Far West Laboratory personnel during the spring semester preceding the study.

Prior to data collection (in February 1978), an additional set of four teachers was recruited to expand the data base. These teachers were selected so that their environmental characteristics (e.g., grade levels, school and student demographics) were similar to the original four IR & DT teachers.

The question identified by the San Diego IR & DT was: *"What are the events which disrupt classroom instruction, and what are the most effective techniques teachers use to cope with these distractions?"* A distraction was defined as an event or stimulus which interrupts the teacher's actions or her intended flow of instruction.

Eight observers were employed and trained to assist in the data collection phase of the study. Two were assigned to observe the classrooms of each participating teacher on nine different occasions. One observer used a checklist to classify the specific distractions and corresponding coping techniques used by the teacher. This observer also rated the effect of the techniques on the distractions (Quantitative Observer). The other observer took detailed notes on all that occurred during each observation period (Ethnographic Observer). Each classroom teacher responded to a set of questions following each of the nine occasions she was observed (Teacher Daily Log).

The eight primary grade classrooms were observed on nine occasions each, spread over six weeks of instruction. The observations were during the reading period (or reading readiness for kindergarten) and, typically, were slightly less than one hour in duration.

Two quantitative classification schemes were developed by the IR & DT team--one explicating anticipated distraction categories, and the other classifying coping techniques. Besides classifying the distractions and the corresponding coping techniques which were exercised, the quantitative observer rated the effectiveness of the relationship of each particular coping technique in response to a specific distraction (distraction-coping linkage). Effectiveness of the distraction-coping linkages was rated with respect to: (1) the instructional time lost due to the distraction, (2) the degree of disjointedness of the instructional activity (interruption of instructional flow), and (3) the degree to which the distraction persisted after a coping technique had been utilized.

Each of the eight classroom teachers participated in two data-reviewing sessions between the sixth and seventh observations. These sessions were intended to provide feedback on the preliminary data which had been collected during the first six observations. The participants of the study identified specific techniques which appeared to be functional, and the teachers developed plans to modify their coping styles ("Intervention Plans").

The pages which follow describe the study from the teachers' perspective. As mentioned earlier, more detailed information regarding the research methodology may be bound in other documents. Passages typed in *italics* are verbatim comments taken from ethnographic observational notes. To maintain anonymity, all names in the ethnographic notes have been replaced with fictitious pseudonyms.

CONTEXT INFORMATION

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - TEACHER A

The Community

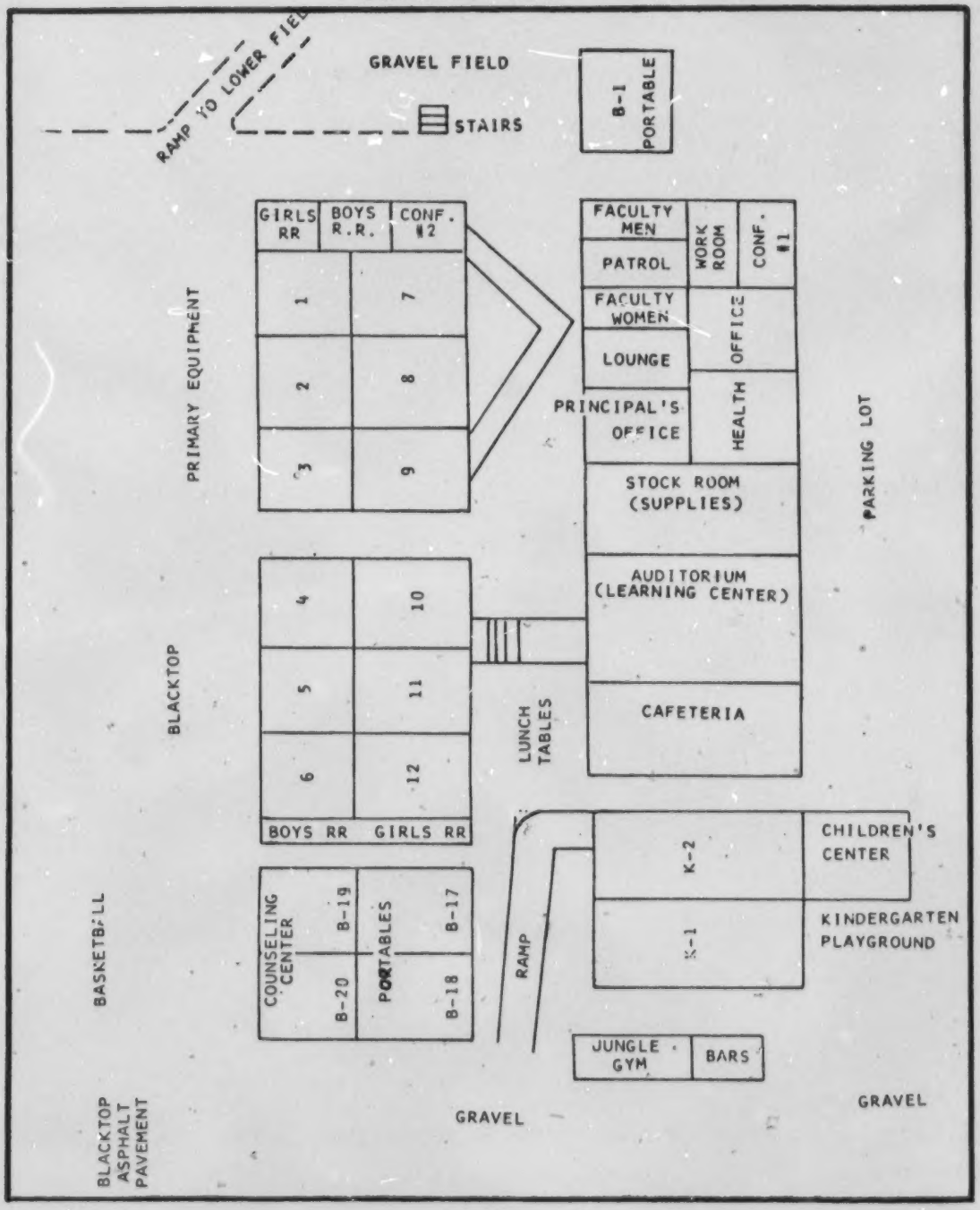
School H (kindergarten-6) was located one-half block from an apartment complex facing a busy four-lane thoroughfare. To the west was a small vacant canyon which separated the school from tract homes. Many of the homes were in need of painting and repair. The yards were poorly maintained. Boarded and broken windows, discarded furniture, broken-down cars, straw-like grass, and dirt yards showed the wear and tear on the homes, most of which were rentals. To the south was a large dirt lot which was occupied by a charter bus company. The facility was used both for parking and for bus maintenance and repairs. A street separated the school from a ravine which was directly in front of the bus lot. On the north side of School H, just past the primary playground, was a fenced-in embankment that lead to the backyards of homes. In contrast to the rest of the community, these homes and yards were well maintained.

The School

School H classrooms were contained in two rows of single-story stucco buildings. The office, auditorium, cafeteria, and two kindergarten classrooms were located in a row on the south side. In front of the kindergarten classrooms and the office were two well-maintained grassy areas edged with well-trimmed bushes. A ramp from the office lead to the remaining sixteen classrooms, four of which were portables. The classrooms were surrounded on three sides by gravel-covered playgrounds. One playground was asphalt (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

DIAGRAM OF SCHOOL H



The buildings were light earth-toned colors. School H had been designated as a "magnet school" in the fall as a part of the district's integration plan. "Magnet schools" attract students from outside their own community by offering exceptional instructional programs. Horton School will offer kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students a full day of instruction conducted in Spanish. Thus, additional capital outlay moneys were allotted and used for refurbishing School H. Since School H was previously well maintained, the changes were few.

School H had a fall enrollment of 401 and during the rest of the 1977-78 school year, 145 additional students enrolled and 120 transferred out. Thus, of every two students who attended School H, only one attended for the entire year. Of the total school enrollment, 75.3 percent were Black, 19.5 percent were Hispanic, 3.2 percent were Asian, and 2 percent were White. Thirty-two of these children were involved in the English as a Second Language Program (ESL). Three hundred thirty-nine of the children were eligible for the free lunch and breakfast programs, and 53 were eligible for a reduced-price lunch.

The faculty of School H consisted of the principal, 17 teachers, one counselor, one re-reading teacher, 18 full-time aides (3-6 hours), and 11 hourly aides. The principal had been at the school for four years. He was a well organized administrator who expected professional quality teaching from his staff. The principal and three teachers were Black, the counselor and one teacher were Hispanic, and the rest of the teachers were White. Nineteen of the aides were Black, one was Hispanic, and nine were White. Special funding from such supplementary programs as Early Childhood Education (ECE), SB 90, Title I, Follow Through, and Miller-Unruh Reading paid for a reading teacher, aides, additional nurse time, a counseling

center, and a learning center. In addition, this funding provided more school equipment and supplies.

The faculty members at School H were hard working and worked well together. Many substitute teachers commented on the pleasant working climate at School H. In general, the staff was concerned about students and worked very hard to help them. Also, the faculty was genuinely interested in each other. This was reflected in the equal sharing of school responsibilities. Teachers at School H usually were eager to help each other with school responsibilities and also shared many outside school activities together.

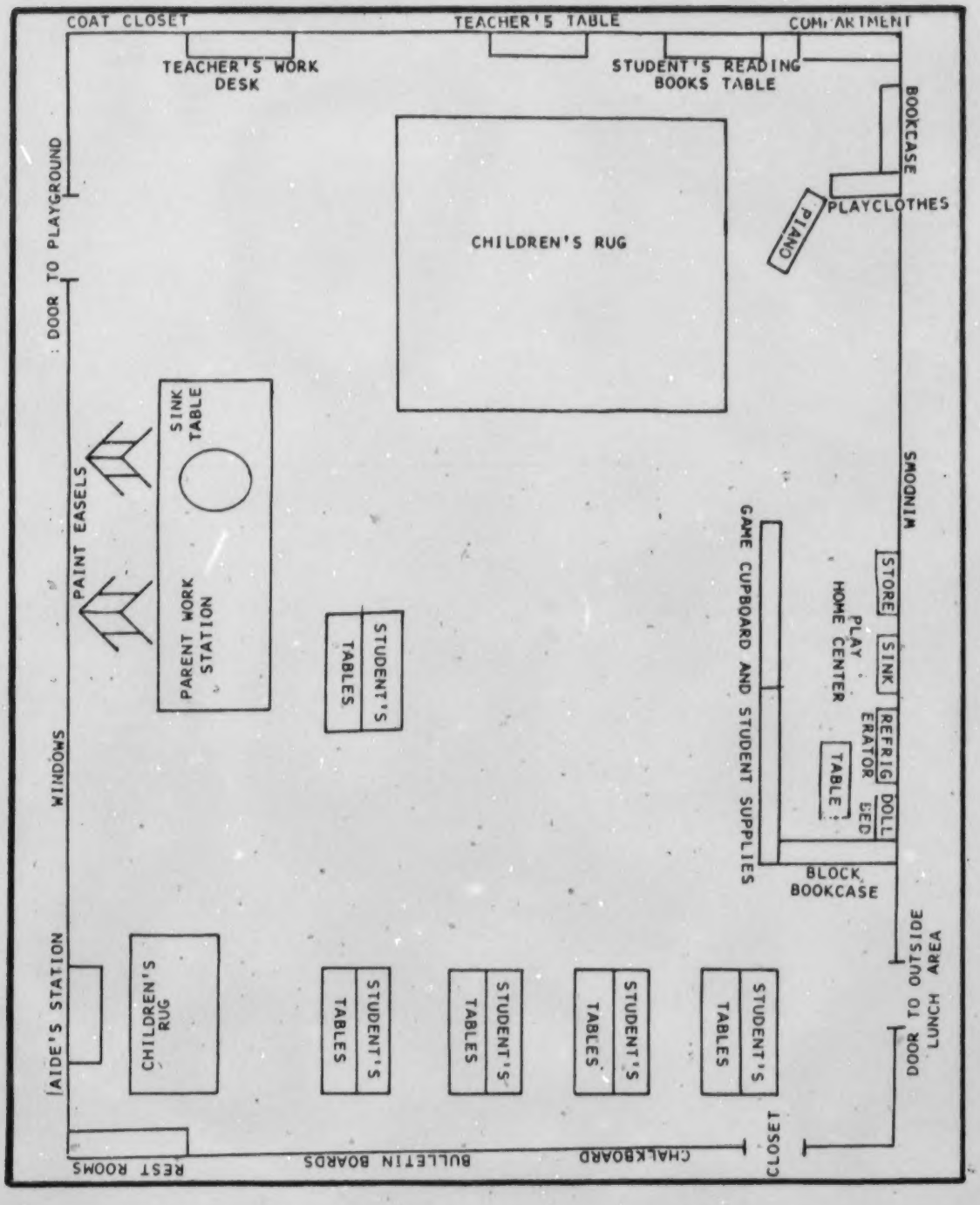
Teacher A's Classroom

Teacher A's floor plan was organized so that the teacher could, at all times, be aware of what kinds of activities were occurring in her classroom. A large green rug was located below the middle of the classroom's west wall (see Figure 2). The rug area was used for total and small group instruction by the teacher. In front of the rug were the teacher's desk and materials. To the right of the rug were bookcases with math and reading manipulative games. On top of bookcases were students' pencils, paste, scissors, and math and reading worksheets. On the east side of the classroom were five sets of two tables arranged back to back. These desks were for the students to use when working on math and reading papers and during assigned worktime periods. Manipulative games for reading and math, art activities, a listening post, and a readiness activity called TRY were also kept on these tables.

To the south was a middle-sized red rug which served as the aides' station, and also was used for reenforcement of basic skills. Next to this

FIGURE 2

DIAGRAM OF TEACHER A'S CLASSROOM



rug was the parent station. This area consisted of cut-and-paste activities and reenforcement activities to be used by parents with students on an individual basis. Just behind this station were two paint easels that were used at worktime. On the right side of the west wall was the teacher's desk. This was used for school instruction preparation. A large chalkboard was on the east side of the room. Above this were large numerals, 0 through 10, with sets drawn on them.

Classroom observations began in February. Teacher A had her room decorated in a valentine theme. The bulletin board was divided into three sections. This added color and life to the room. The first section was a "color word" board with fancy bright valentines cut out of construction paper. There was one for each of the primary colors, with a word card naming its color. The next section was the "number and set" board. It was divided into six sections. Each contained one numeral from 1 to 6, with a matching valentine set. The themes of the "color word" and "number and set" boards were changed according to the holiday occurring each month.

The last section of the bulletin board contained five animals. The animals were made out of red and pink construction paper valentines. On each animal was a different letter of the alphabet and matching pictures. On the wall in front of the green rug were alphabet letter cards. On each side of the rug was a chart holder. A calendar with bright red hearts was placed on one holder. The other held "Mr. Quiet Man," a large brown-faced boy who reminded the children of their good listening standards.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

The Students

When observations began in February, Teacher A had 30 children--

17 boys and 13 girls. Twenty of the children were Black, nine were Hispanic, and one child was Asian. Seven of the ten non-Black children were receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Due to increased enrollment at School H, classrooms were reorganized during the observations. Two students were transferred to another classroom. Almost immediately, three other students transferred in from other schools and three transferred out to other schools. This kept the enrollment at 28.

In September, the majority of Teacher A's children were low achieving, academically. By February, through means of testing and teacher observation, students had been grouped, according to their ability, into three reading levels. Twelve of the students needed remediation and readiness skills. Ten students were working almost at grade level. Eight students were working right at grade level.

By the end of the observations, ten children were still working below grade level and receiving extra classroom instruction in reading. Eighteen of the children were working at grade level. Eight of the eighteen children were finishing their first pre-primer. The other ten were just beginning their first pre-primer.

Many of the students in Teacher A's classroom had parents who worked and who were non-English speaking. The students came from homes with many brothers and sisters. Generally, the students were glad to be in school. They came to school eagerly and wanted to learn. Just a few of the students had poor attendance. This, of course, was reflected in their classroom work. Most of the students' parents were interested in their children's school progress. Twenty out of thirty parents attended parent/teacher conferences held twice during the year. Yet only five parents

came to the classroom to assist, and they did so only on an irregular basis.

Teacher A

Teacher A has taught kindergarten at School H for seven years. This was her first teaching position. She went to a junior college for two years and then transferred to a state college to finish her teaching credential. While in college, Teacher A worked as a teacher assistant for two years.

She was in her late twenties, and wore her blond hair short and simple. She was short, slim, and dressed casually and neatly. Teacher A had a confident but quiet demeanor.

Teacher A typically started the school day with opening management tasks such as attendance and the flag salute. This gave her a flexible time to take care of the children's needs and to establish a warm relationship with the children. This also helped to keep children from interrupting instruction time with their needs. This is illustrated by the ethnographic observer's notes that follow.

> *The teacher is sitting in front of the children, who are sitting cross legged on the green rug. One of the children says that Miles has a new watch and the teacher says that he will have to show it to her later and she smiles. Violet says that her mother said that she needs to drink a lot of water today. The teacher tells her to get a drink now and which times during the day will be good ones to get water. The room is very tranquil. We are sitting to the left of the fireman's pole. There are 26 children sitting cross legged on the green rug. Evan and Terry are chosen to take the attendance to the office. Evan is complimented on his good behavior and told that he will get a good citizenship badge if he keeps it up. All of the children are asked to stand and do a poem with the teacher. The teacher asks Paul about his stomach, if it hurts him. She asks what he had for breakfast, if he wants to use the bathroom. Then she asks him to come up and she says she will loosen his belt. At the same time she does this, she asks the children to put up their hands to get ready for "Five Little Rabbits," not to talk but just to put their hands up.*

Teacher A was firm, yet caring. She was almost always the authority and stayed in control of the class. She was "stern at times," but preferred to discipline in a quiet manner.

> *The teacher says sternly, a little louder, "Mike, come here. He hesitates and she says, "Now." He looks very serious. He walks over to her. She holds his hands and talks very quietly to him with his face very close to hers.*

She used many nonverbal coping techniques.

> *The teacher snaps her fingers and points to Paul to sit up. He does. Evan sits to the left of the teacher and Kenny is sitting to her right. She gently taps Evan on the leg. The teacher very quietly reminds Evan and Kenny to behave.*

Teacher A used many preventative techniques to avoid classroom problems.

> *The teacher reminds the children that they will all have a turn to play the math game. She asks rows 3 and 2 to stand and to sit next to the rug. She reminds the children again that if they do not have a turn today, they will have a turn tomorrow.*

Her classroom arrangement, careful instruction, preparation, positive reinforcement statements, and careful pacing of instruction helped to prevent many distractions. The classroom was arranged so that the teacher always had a view of the entire room, and could prevent problems before they occurred or could handle them immediately. She maintained control and adapted to the changing needs of the kindergarten children. She used finger plays, action games, and music to introduce new activities, to break up instruction time to initiate transitions, and to bring children back to task.

> *All of the children are sitting cross legged around the edges of the rug. The teacher passes out cards with numbers on them. They have yarn through them so that the children can put them around their necks. The teacher says, "Kenny, will you help us, please?" The mother in the room says, "Shush." The teacher says, "Can I pass out more numbers if there is talking?" The teacher compliments the quiet children. Then she says, "There*

is some talking." The teacher begins and the children join in with her to sing, "Hickory, Dickory, Dock," and "We Are Sitting Straight and Tall."

The children knew what was expected of them. The teacher sometimes reminded them with a question, "Does Mrs. A care who finishes first?" The children say, "No." "Mrs. A wants to see good work," the teacher says. The teacher used a quiet, calm voice. She used a variety of positive reinforcement statements such as, "I like all the quiet workers I see." She gave children a chance to become "good citizens" after she had to reprimand them (e.g., "I like the way you are working now.").

The teacher worked very comfortably with both parent volunteers and her aide. She is confident and involved both with the children and with other adults.

During the morning reading period, the children were placed randomly into two reading groups and received the same reading lesson. The children later were divided into three groups and received reading instruction that was appropriate for their reading levels. (Note: This instruction time was not observed for this study.) In the morning, all the children received instructions for their reading and math papers on the large green rug. Half the children stayed for instruction on the rug and the other half picked up their papers and pencils from the bookcases and worked at their tables. Children chose where to sit as long as there were no more than three at a table. If the children talked, teacher or aide would ask them to move to another table by themselves. The aide monitored the children as they worked. The children on the rug received a reading lesson. After the lesson, a bell was rung and the two groups switched. The lesson was then repeated for the other group. The aide checked and graded the children's work during this

time. Children who did not complete their work during this period finished at recess and then the teacher checked and graded the papers.

Aide

Teacher A's six-hour Aide A had been with the school district for 14 years. Aide A had been Teacher A's aide for four years. Her manner was firm and demanding. She was always in control of the children. The children always knew what was expected of them. Aide A had a warm way with the children, and displayed a sense of humor, when appropriate.

Teacher A and Aide A reinforced each other's standards, which made for a consistent climate. Aide A was very good with parent rapport because she was raised in the school community. She assisted in making the parents feel very comfortable in the classroom. She was also able to approach some parents about some problems that would be very difficult for the teacher to resolve. Parents sometimes discussed with Aide A things they would not feel comfortable in discussing with Teacher A.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - TEACHER W

The Community

School K was surrounded by a residential area, government-subsidized housing, and a major interstate freeway. The residential area consisted of small, older, generally well-kept homes. Many of these homes reflected a pride in ownership and a respect for the neighborhood. The government-subsidized housing consisted of two very large and separate apartment complexes. These were also well maintained. The commercial areas (fast food, businesses, liquor and grocery stores) within walking distance of the school were less attractive and usually littered. The businesses which were closed

down had left behind broken glass, weeds, and scattered trash.

The residential areas served by the school were broken up by a major street, and some children crossed a complex busy intersection on their way to and from school. The children who did this passed by the commercial area close to the school and many frequently succumbed to the temptation of the fast-food businesses and the availability of candy at the liquor store.

A YMCA served the community just a short walk from the school. It was an attractive all-wood building, but it, too, fought the problems of broken glass and litter from nearby lots. A minority-owned bank bordering the school was another pride of the community.

The School

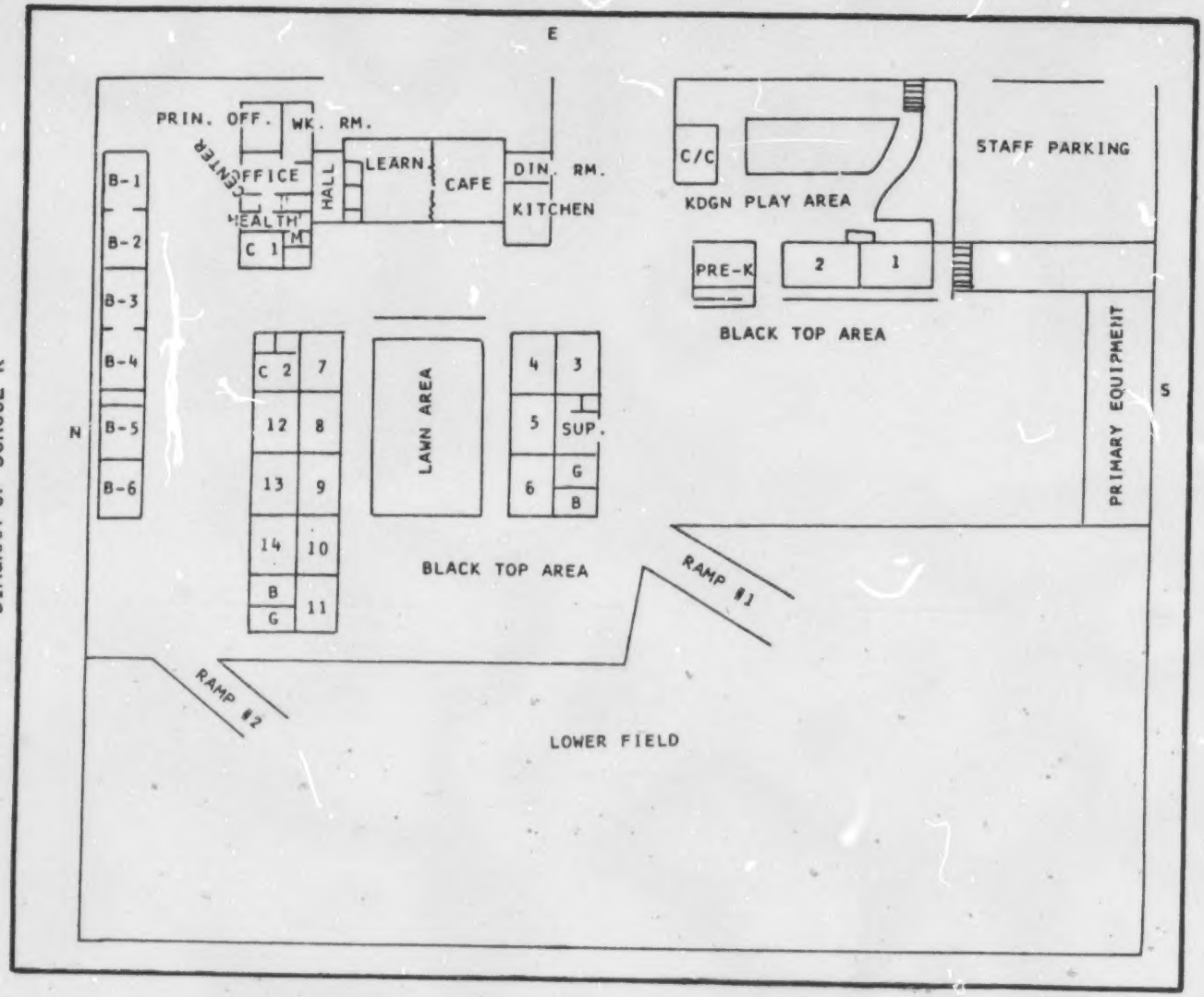
School K was an older school with single-story, light brown stucco buildings. Some bungalows remained from the days when the school had approximately 1,000 students, but other bungalows had been moved because of a declining enrollment during the previous eight years. The trees and shrubs around the facility were well established and there were a few lawns. The graffitti around the school was minimal and the vandalism was down in contrast to the years when the school was larger.

The playground/blacktop area on the south side of the school was uninteresting, devoid of trees and lawns, and included a minimum of equipment (see Figure 3). Play areas were painted on the blacktop. A lower field (also with very little equipment) was all dirt and for use only by upper grades.

School K had a fall enrollment of 420 and during the rest of the 1977-78 school year, 57 additional students enrolled and 79 transferred out.

FIGURE 3

DIAGRAM OF SCHOOL K



Thus, of every seven students who attended School K, only five attended for the entire year.

School K accommodated a prekindergarten and a children's center, in addition to kindergarten and grades 1 through 6. The school was predominantly Black (87.1 percent), with 6.3 percent Asian, 4.2 percent Hispanic, and 2.3 percent White. More than 300 children received free lunches and more than 50 others received reduced-price lunches, reflecting the low income of the school population. The school population was also served by the following federal and state supplementary programs: ESEA Title I, Project Follow Through, State Preschool program, Miller-Unruh Basic Reading Act, Educationally Disadvantaged Youth (SB 90), and Early Childhood Education (ECE).

For the 1977-78 school year, School K had a staff consisting of one principal, fourteen classroom teachers (two male and twelve female), two project resource teachers, one Miller-Unruh reading teacher, one special education teacher, and twenty-three aides. Only two of the teachers were new to the school. The ethnic makeup of the certificated staff included eleven Whites and eight Blacks. Most of the aides were Black.

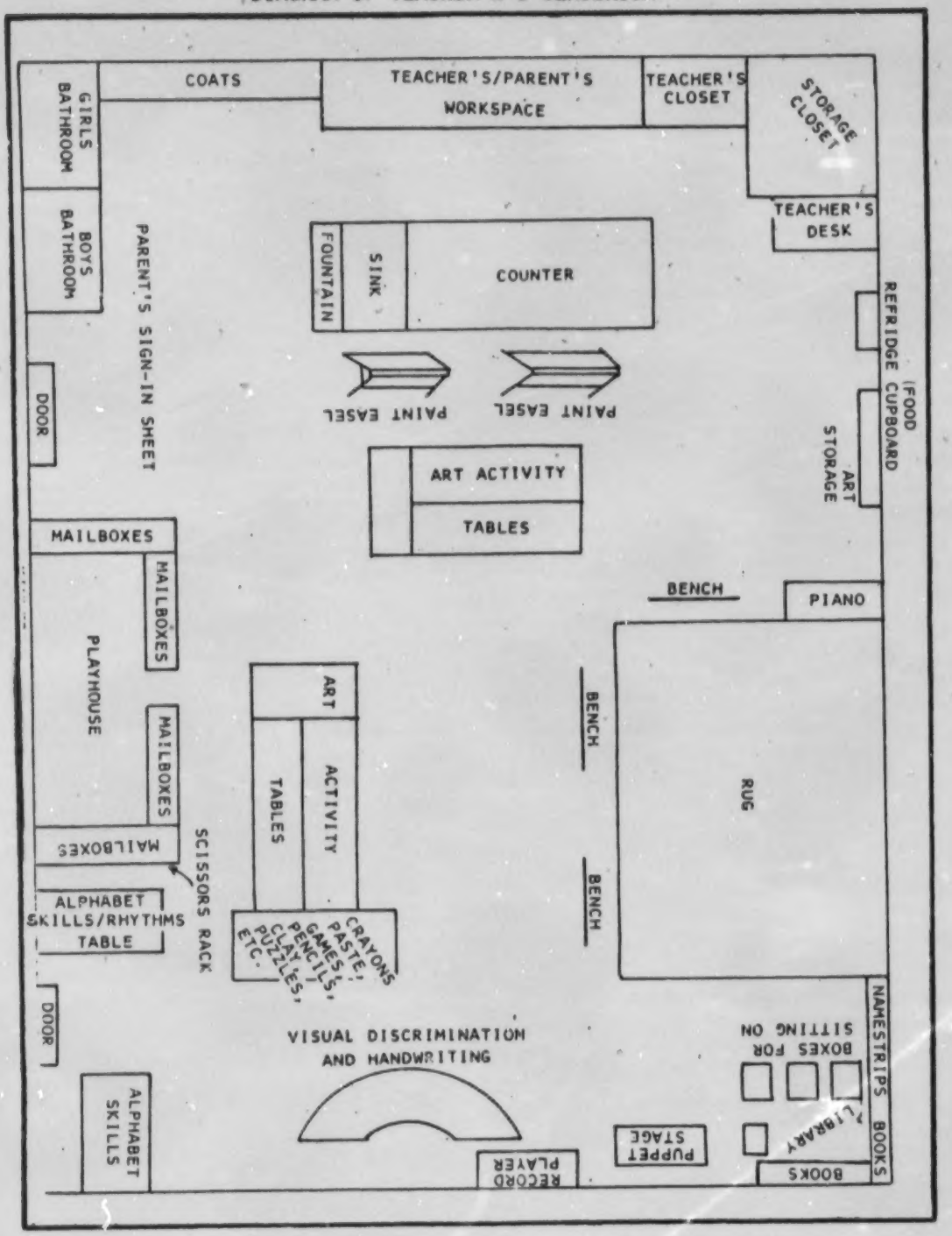
The principal, while new and inexperienced in handling a complex budget involving both the district and a variety of supplementary funding sources, did an excellent job providing leadership for School K. The staff definitely seemed to feel support from the administration.

Teacher W's Classroom

Teacher W's kindergarten classroom was a spacious, sunny room, opening up to the kindergarten play yard (see Figure 4). Areas of specialized activity were easily identified: teacher/parent work space,

FIGURE 4

DIAGRAM OF TEACHER W'S CLASSROOM



painting area, library, puppet theatre, mailboxes for personal belongings, and a playhouse. Table groupings allowed for flexibility in activities--they were used for different purposes at different times of the day. The large standard kindergarten rug was surrounded by brightly painted sawhorses to provide additional seating. Wooden boxes were used for additional seating around the library. Crayons, pencils, paste, scissors, and other materials used by the children were centralized on one movable table in an area convenient to the table groupings. Puzzles, clay, games, and other frequently used manipulatives were also located on this movable table.

The bathrooms and the water fountain had red plastic tape on the floor in front of them to facilitate lines for drinks or use of the bathroom--the first person in line did not step over the tape while waiting for a turn. The mailbox area for personal belongings was color coded and labeled with names. One group of mailboxes (ice cream tubs) was painted red, another yellow, another blue, and another green.

Teacher W's classroom had exceptionally large bulletin boards. One wall was covered with animal puppets, one for each letter of the alphabet. Each colorful, three-dimensional puppet was attached to a poster that had the upper and lower case letter represented by that puppet printed on the poster (e.g., "Aa" with "Alligator Al"). An adjacent bulletin board had large, brightly chalked numerals from 0 to 10 with sets of objects on each numeral. One end of the same board was divisioned off and reserved for a display of children's art work. Wall space above the bulletin boards was covered with a large set of the basic shapes, and a set of leaves in the basic colors, each labeled with the appropriate color word. The room calendar was on a small bulletin board directly in front of the large rug.

Below the calendar was the "weather box" which was used to discuss the daily weather. Much instruction went on during morning opening management tasks, taking advantage of the numerals, letters, and words associated with this calendar board.

CHARACTERISITICS OF PARTICIPANTS

The Students

In February, 1978, Teacher W had 29 kindergarten students in her class--16 boys and 13 girls. Twenty-seven of these students were Black and two were Asian. One of the Asian students was limited-English speaking (LES) and was helped daily by an English as a Second Language (ESL) tutor. During the observation period, one boy transferred out and one girl transferred in. The classroom enrollment was exceptionally stable.

All but four of the children in this classroom had attended a preschool, but the majority of the class till needed experiences and instruction at the readiness level. Six of the children were exceptionally strong in alphabet recognition and readiness skills and began reading instruction a month before the observations began. Several of the children who were exceptionally weak in motor development or discrimination skill were pulled out and received additional instruction from the aide who managed the school sensorimotor lab.

With few exceptions, Teacher W's students were easily motivated and eager to please. By February, 1978, when the observations began, a classroom routine was well established and children were generally observant of the classroom rules and procedures. Three of the children had severe problems with inattentiveness, impulsive behavior, and lack of self-control, but the majority of the class was enthusiastic and cooperative. Parent

support in Teacher W's classroom was especially strong for School K, and parent volunteers frequently assisted in the room.

Teacher W

Teacher W had taught at School K since 1970. She did her teacher training through San Diego State University after receiving her bachelor's degree at University of California at San Diego. She was hired immediately after receiving her credential and has taught only at School K.

At the time of the observations, Teacher W was 30 and was short and slender. She wore her brunette hair at a medium length and dressed casually. She was a structured and well-organized teacher. Her voice was quiet and controlled in the classroom but she had a tolerance for noise, if she felt it was productive. Her attention was primarily with the small group of children she was involved with at any one time, and she constantly encouraged children to be self-directed in their daily activities. Her concern for her students was evident in her teaching style. She exhibited respect for her kindergarteners, especially, by not talking down to them. Teacher W's classroom discipline was largely based on positive techniques. She put name cards on a special "Friends" pocket chart of especially helpful children, rather than listing the names of uncooperative children on the board. She also used learning experiences as rewards for good behavior. (Especially cooperative children might get a special story to take home or they received a special privilege in the room that allowed them to perform a learned skill.) She used various nonverbal signals to calm the class and regain attention, such as playing the xylophone or a chord on the piano.

Many of Teacher W's teaching techniques were preventative in nature. She was well prepared and materials were easily accessible--this helped the

flow of activities. Directions were always given with the intent of preventing future distractions by demonstrating, clarifying, and then asking for questions. Early in the ninth observation, the ethnographer gave the following accounts:

> *The teacher is explaining to the children how they will be using play dough today. She tells them that they will be labeling paper plates with their names on them as they cannot put their names on the play dough itself. Most of the children are listening attentively. She demonstrates how the play dough softens with use. She asks the children to raise their hands when they need more flour. The children are sitting cross legged on the green rug. Nine are on benches. The teacher tells the children that they can make what they want to with the play dough and that they can take their finished project home, that they can spend as much time at it as they wish. The teacher tells the children to put their finished project on the shelf above the mailboxes. There will not be room in the mailboxes. She tells the children that there is one rule which is the most important rule . . . then the teacher begins to explain this rule. She says, "You have to respect someone else's work. If you like it, look, don't touch," and she emphasizes "don't touch." Her positive reinforcement approach was also preventative. Children following rules were complimented and rewarded (by recognition on the "Friends chart" described above), and most children attempted to earn that recognition.*

When preventative techniques failed, Teacher W reacted to disruptions in a variety of ways to be discussed later. In general, she tolerated a high noise level as she encouraged interaction among the children. This tolerance for noise and priority on interaction carried with it the risk that productive interaction sometimes lead to nonproductive playfulness, a common occurrence with four- and five-year-old children. Most work periods were quite noisy and necessitated the teacher being interrupted frequently during small group instruction to solve conflicts or get children back on task.

Teacher W's relationship with parent volunteers was warm and

friendly. One sign above the parent sign-in sheet read: "Parents: Please sign in. We love you!" Another sign above the parent work space said, "Parent Volunteers, help yourself to coffee!" She obviously welcomed parents in the room and quickly put them to work.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of the children needed experience and instruction at the readiness level. Therefore, the "reading period" that was observed was actually a reading readiness program, except in the case of six children who had strong skills and received actual reading instruction during this period. The initial morning meeting was integral to the work period which followed since much instruction went on related to the calendar board. It was also during the morning opening management tasks that alphabet letters were introduced, an alphabet poem related to the newly introduced letters taught, and directions for the worktime given or reviewed.

The morning "worktime" consisted of three concurrent activities requiring three different table groupings where readiness skills were instructed or reinforced. After the morning meeting and after directions were given to the total group, the teacher flashed name strips for each of three activities, and children would go to the particular activity for which their names were flashed. The teacher supervised a visual discrimination and handwriting skills activity table. The aide supervised an alphabet skills activity table. A parent helper (or the aide, when no parent volunteer was present) supervised an art activity table. The alphabet activity table reinforced alphabet-related activities which had been introduced during the morning meeting. And the art activity table frequently reinforced newly learned readiness skills while it also improved manipulative skills.

After the children completed their morning tasks, an adult checked them. The children then put their tasks in their mailboxes to take home, and went to the rug where they were free to choose a readiness manipulative game or activity. When Teacher W completed the instruction and supervision of the visual discrimination/handwriting skills groups, she signalled her reading group of six children that it was time for their reading instruction by briefly playing a tambourine. They moved to the opposite end of the room from the rug, in relative privacy from the rest of the group, and were instructed in reading for approximately 15 minutes until it was time for recess. It was during this 15-minute period that the aide was primarily responsible for supervision of the rest of the group doing various games on the rug, reading in library, or at the listening post.

Aide

Teacher W had a very close working relationship with her six-hour aide as they had been together for seven years. Their classroom styles were compatible, especially with respect to noise level tolerance and concern for the children. The aide modeled her discipline techniques after those of the teacher so that there was a consistent approach used in the room. The aide was especially competent in small group instruction, and Teacher W took advantage of this rather than merely assigning her paper grading tasks or general room supervision. (Note: The observers, while appreciating the aide's manner of working with individual children, felt that she was weak in total group control since she tended, as did the teacher, to become quite involved with the particular children she was working with.)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

DISTRACTIONS

At the end of six observations, data was gathered that categorized the distractions occurring in Teacher A's and Teacher W's classrooms. A distraction was defined as an event or stimulus which interrupted the teacher's actions or her intended flow of instruction. The data revealed that 90.2 percent of the distractions in Teacher A's classroom and 94.4 percent in Teacher W's classroom were student generated. In other words, in both these kindergarten classrooms, the vast majority of the distractions were created by the students themselves. (Refer to Appendix A for list of distractions and examples.)

Common Distractions

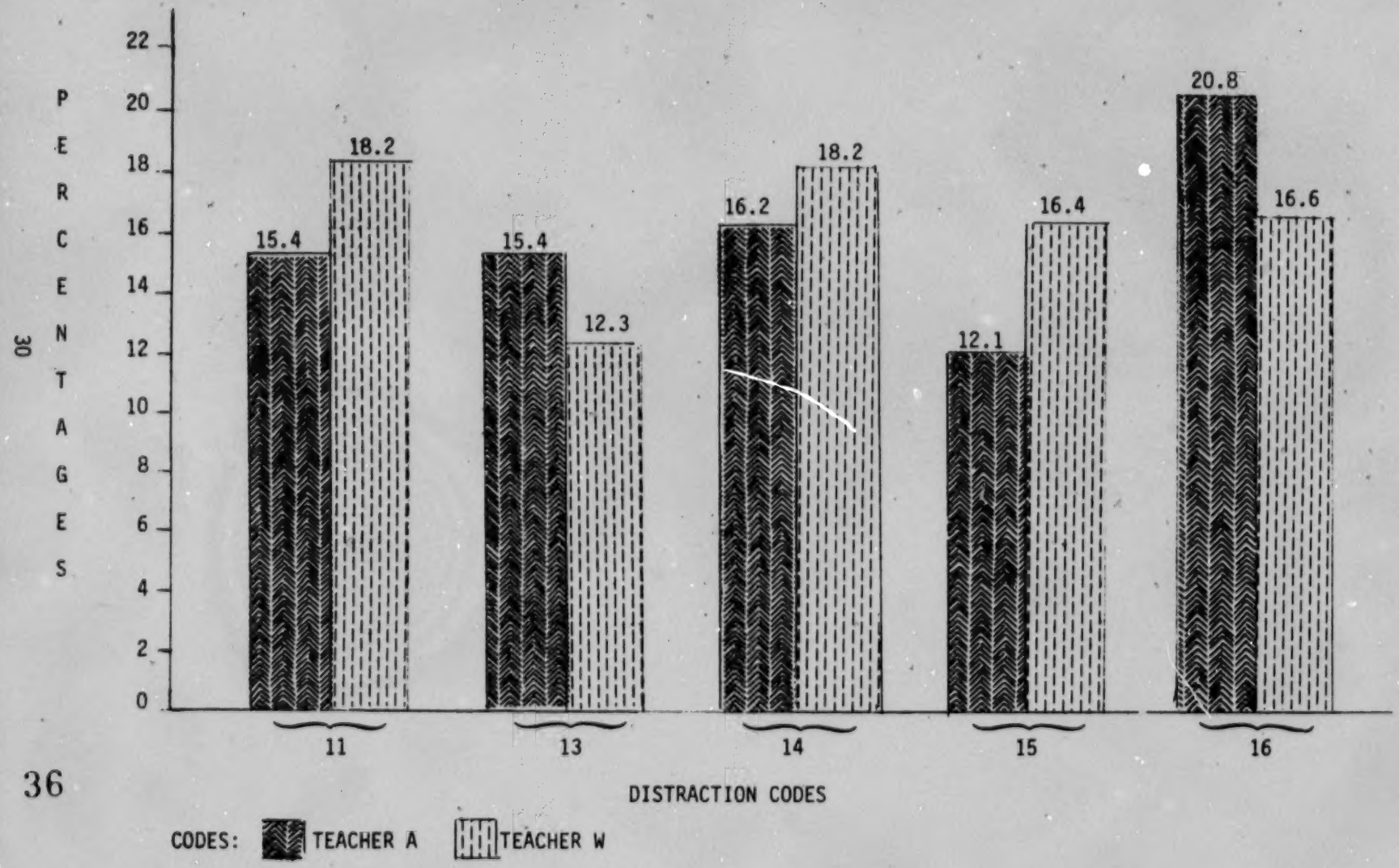
Several types of student-generated distractions were regular occurrences in both rooms. Teachers A and W, for example, were frequently interrupted by students. This included such distractions as students poking the teacher, students seeking approval, students telling of other students bothering them, and miscellaneous student questions concerning the restroom, feeling ill, etc. (Refer to Figure 5, Distraction #11.) The observer noted the following example in Teacher A's classroom:

> *Ann comes to the teacher and the teacher says, "What do you think you want to do about it?" (Ann says something quietly.) The teacher shakes her head yes and looks serious and says, "Just cross it out." Then Ann returns to her place at the curved table.*

Both teachers were also frequently distracted by student-student interactions which were disruptive. These included student disagreements, difficulties in sharing, pushing, hitting, and off-task discussions. (Refer to Figure 5, Distraction #13.)

FIGURE 5

COMMON DISTRACTION PROFILE FOR TEACHERS A AND W
OBSERVATIONS 1-6



Teacher A looks over at Nancy and two other children who are talking. The teacher says softly, "Oh, some of our friends are forgetting their best manners." The teacher plays hand-shaking game with all of the children around the rug.

General student noise was a distraction faced by both teachers. (Refer to Figure 5, Distraction #14.)

It's transition time. Teacher W continues to go to individual children to ask them to clean up. The aide says, "Shh." The teacher goes to the front and plays the xylophone. It gets a little bit quieter in the room and then she plays it louder and it gets very quiet.

Students not concentrating on classroom activities was a frequent distraction for Teachers A and W. This distraction included children not listening or following instructions, general foolishness and clowning around. (Refer to Figure 5, Distraction #15.)

Teacher A says, "I have a few not ready yet." She asks a girl to come to her from a work table. She says, "Nancy and Paul, let's go. Your time is up. All right, Dee, Ann, Kenny, bring your papers over and get into line, please." The teacher goes to Kenny and says, "Let's see your papers." He has his head down on them. Then she says to him to go to the bathroom and she tells another boy at his table to go to the bathroom. The teacher says quietly but sternly, "Nancy and Terry, right now."

Both teachers frequently had to interrupt instruction because of a student's physical position or location. This distraction included wandering students, inappropriate student posture/seating, and wiggling. (Refer to Figure 5, Distraction #16.)

Teacher W says, "Shh, Diane, I want you to watch." She asks a girl to put her barette back in her hair and she does. The teacher asks David to wait his turn. One girl begins playing with the bead frame but no notice is made. Another girl stands and walks to the back, remains standing a moment and then sits. "David, sit so that the person behind you can see." Then the teacher says, "Kelly, sit up." Andy begins to talk, the teacher looks at him and says, "Shh." Then he quiets down and continues holding up his picture of Mr. Valentine.

In addition to these student-generated distractions, both teachers

had to deal with some school-generated distractions, including fire drills, pull-out programs, clarification of instructions needed by nonstudents, and school-management related activities. These types of distractions occurred 4.6 percent in Teacher A's room and 3.5 percent in Teacher W's room. While these distractions did interfere with instruction, their frequency was minimal compared to the frequency of student-generated distractions. For this reason, they were not included in the Distraction Profile. A typical example of a school-generated distraction was noted by the observer when a counselor arrived in the classroom to conference with one of the teachers.

> *Mrs. Mitchell comes in. The teacher stops what she is doing and talks to her. They arrange to meet at 10:15 during the teacher's break.*

Teachers A and W were also occasionally interrupted by out-of-school generated distractions such as visitors, and special-project related activities (i.e., testing and record keeping). This type of distraction also occurred very minimally compared to student-generated distractions. Only 0.3 percent of Teacher A's and 0.5 percent of Teacher W's distractions were of this type. The observer noted the following example:

> *The teacher tells the observers that today will be a little different. Someone is coming in to do dental check-ups. Reading will begin later. The hygienist is already a little late. The teacher says that she expected her earlier. The teacher is doing an arithmetic lesson with all of the children on the green rug while waiting. The dental team arrives.*

Both teachers felt that the similarity of their "Distraction Profiles" was due primarily to the characteristics of kindergarten children. Kindergarten children typically exhibit immature behavior such as short attention span, impulsiveness, spontaneity, and playfulness--all natural behaviors which can result in student-generated classroom distractions.

COPING TECHNIQUES

During the first six observations, observers recorded the coping techniques used by Teachers A and W. Coping techniques are defined as techniques employed by a teacher when an event occurred which diverted her attention from instruction. A coping profile was made for each teacher reflecting this information. The two profiles were then combined for comparison of techniques. (Refer to Figures 6 and 7.) These data revealed that Teachers A and W had common as well as unique coping techniques. (Refer to Appendix B for list of coping techniques and examples.)

Common Coping Techniques

Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING A DIRECT COMMAND OR INSTRUCTION) was the technique most frequently used by both teachers. Teacher A used this technique 35.2 percent of the time during the first six observations, while Teacher W used it 41.9 percent of the time. The technique was consistently effective in quickly eliminating distractions. An example of its use was noted by the observer:

> *Teacher A says sternly, but quietly, "Kenny, finish that right now." She repeated, "Right now." And he begins working.*

Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING OR REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES) was another common coping technique (refer to Figure 6). Teachers A and W used this technique to prevent many anticipated problems:

> *Teacher W: "What will happen if you swing your yarn, Roy?" Roy: "It will break." Teacher: "Then you wouldn't have a handle on your valentine's bag."*

Another commonly used coping technique was #21 (TEACHER USING BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES, AND/OR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS) (refer to Figure 6). Both teachers relied on this technique because it was quick, effective, and nondisruptive to other children.

FIGURE 6

PROFILE FOR COMMON COPING TECHNIQUES
FOR TEACHERS A AND W
OBSERVATIONS 1-6

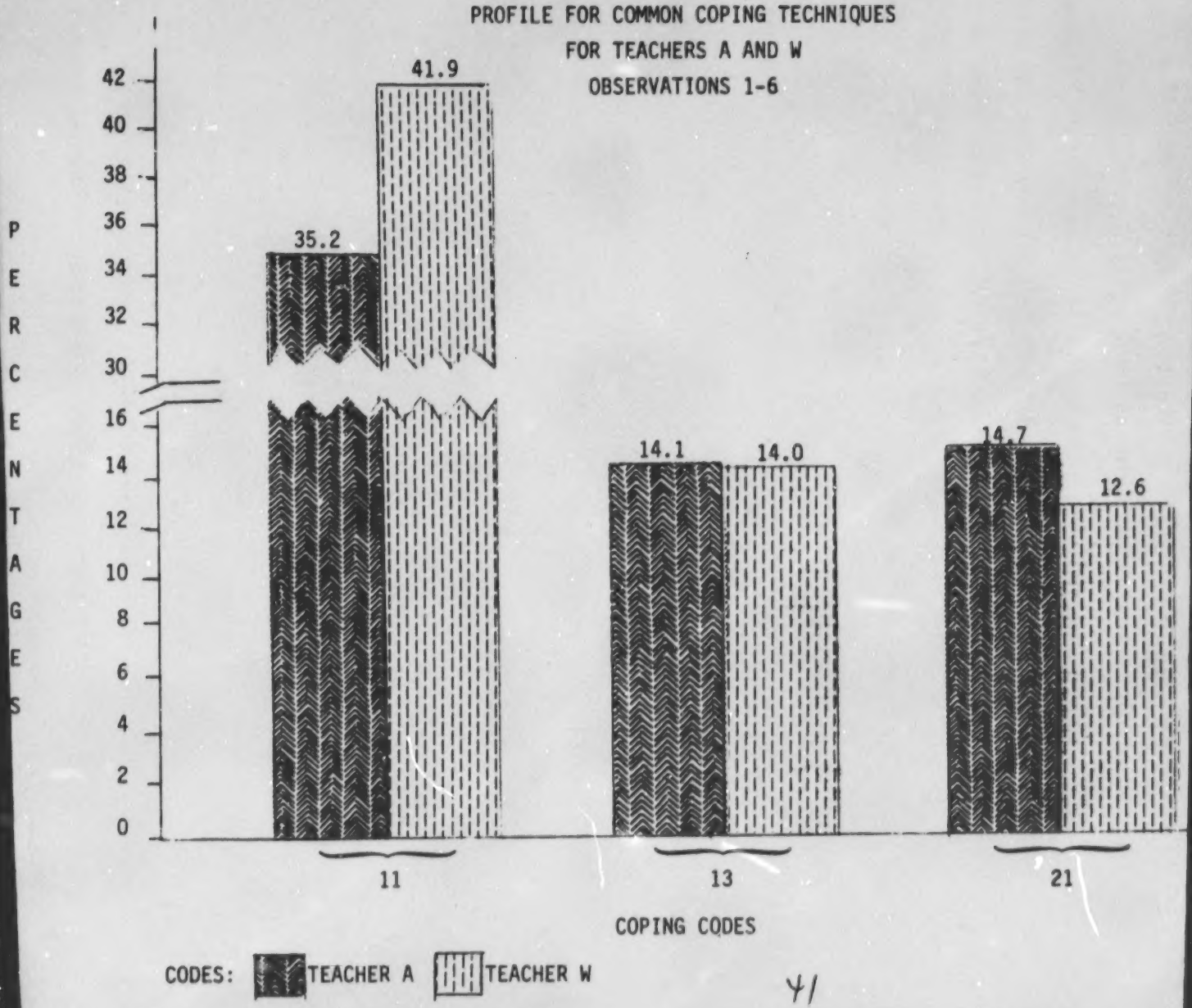
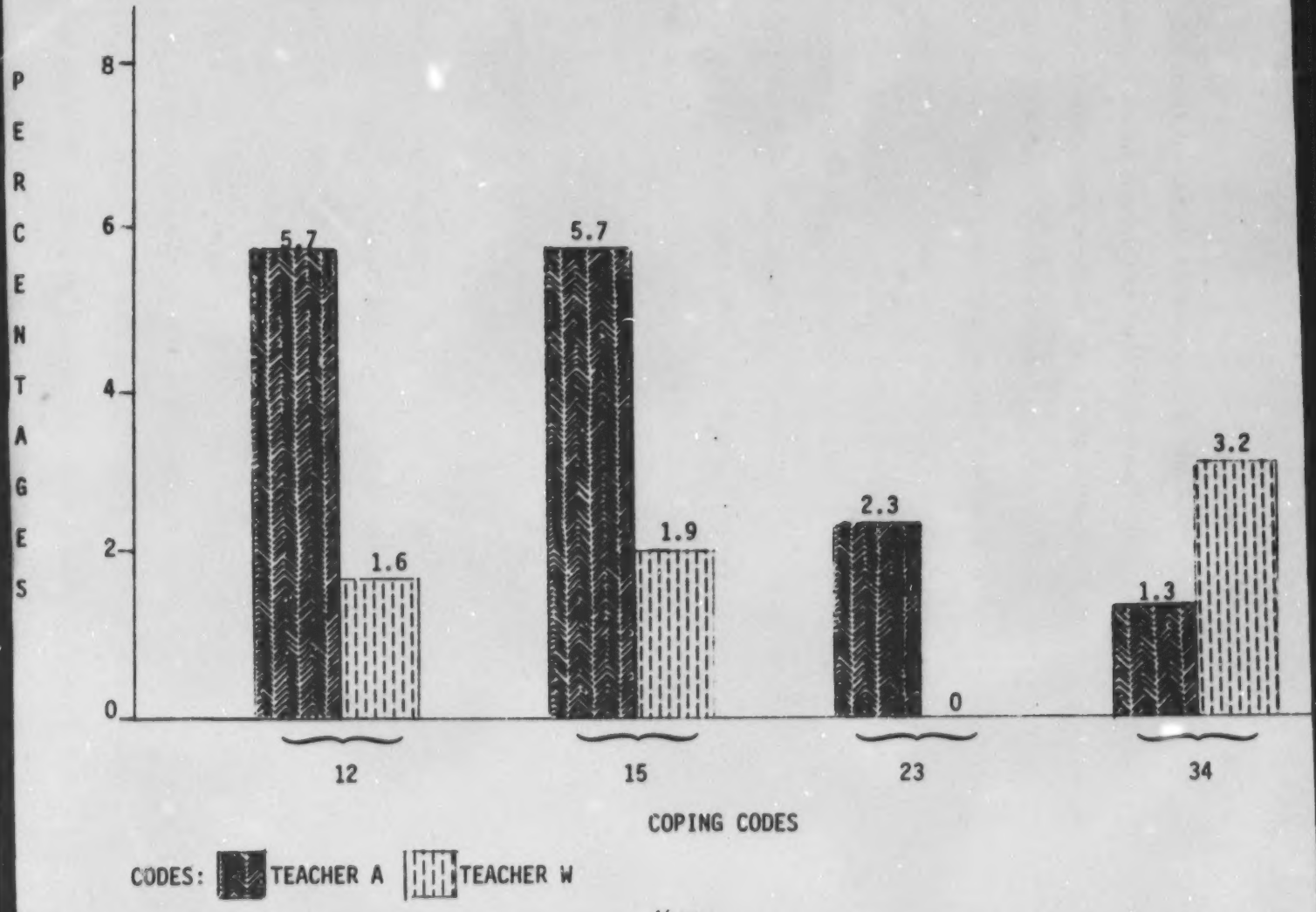


FIGURE 7

PROFILE FOR UNIQUE COPING TECHNIQUES
FOR TEACHERS A AND W
OBSERVATIONS 1-6



Teacher A begins reading the book. The children are watching and they smile a little. There is some soft talking. The teacher gently touches Paul (to regain his attention).

Unique Coping Techniques

When Teachers A and W compared their two profiles for common coping techniques, they also found that they had unique coping techniques.

It was discovered that both teachers used Coping Technique #12 (TEACHER COMPLIMENTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR). Teacher A used it more than three times as often as Teacher W (refer to Figure 7). Note the following brief example:

Teacher A says to a child, "You're a good watcher."

Teacher A also used Coping Technique #15 (TEACHER USING VARYING PATTERNS OR CLUES TO GAIN STUDENT ATTENTION OR APPROPRIATE STUDENT ACTION) more than three times as often as Teacher W. Teacher A used a lot of finger plays and songs to keep students on task. These were coded as Coping Technique #15 (refer to Figure 7). The observer noted the following example:

Teacher A says, "I need a friend to play our quiet game. Who is a warm fuzzy listener?" She calls on Ann. Ann gets in front of the room and plays "Follow Me" game with the children.

The "Profile for Unique Coping Techniques" illustrates that Teacher A used Coping Technique #23 (TEACHER PHYSICALLY REDIRECTING STUDENT'S ATTENTION) and that Teacher W did not (refer to Figure 7).

Teacher A compliments the children who are ready. Then the teacher nudges Kenny's book with her foot. She points to the place on the page with her hand where they are.

After discussion with the ethnographic observers, it was concluded that Teacher W did, in reality, use Coping Technique #23, but in combination with Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND), and hence is

recorded as Coping Technique #52. The following example was cited:

> *Kelly goes for a new crayon. Teacher W touches her arm and says to use the same crayon.*

Teacher W was observed making use of Coping Technique #34 (TEACHER USING OTHER ADULTS IN THE CLASSROOM TO COPE WITH OR PREVENT DISTRACTIONS) more frequently than Teacher A (refer to Figure 7). Teacher W usually had more parent volunteers in the room to rely on. Teacher W also depended on her aide for large group management during reading each morning. After the reading readiness work time in Teacher W's classroom, the majority of the children were on the rug doing readiness manipulative games and activities under the supervision of the aide. This allowed Teacher W to concentrate entirely on the group of children to whom she was providing reading instruction. The following passage is exemplary of how Teacher W relied on her aide for management of part of the class:

> *The reading group is very attentive. A boy comes to ask the teacher something and the teacher says, "Would you tell that to Mrs. May, please." The teacher says that Tom read perfectly and with good expression, and signals this with her fingers.*

When the quantitative data for Coping Technique #34 was analyzed, it showed that Teacher W used her aide more to cope with or to prevent distractions than Teacher A. Because of the nature of the data collection instrument, the observers recorded a distraction only when it interrupted the teacher. In truth, both teachers used their aides to cope with distractions in a similar manner.

Teacher A also used her aide to monitor students while they did their seat work. Both aides were used similarly, yet functioned differently. Teacher A's aide had more initiative and became more involved in disciplining the children. This left the teacher free to do reading instruction with

a small group. At the beginning of the school year, while establishing classroom standards and management, Teacher A had told the children not to disturb her during this instruction time and to ask the aide for assistance. Such preventative coping techniques were subtle to observers and, hence, difficult to record on the quantitative checklist.

Besides working with her small reading group, Teacher A also did a lot of classroom monitoring of children doing seat work by using such statements as:

I like the way Paul is doing his work now.

This kind of statement also helped in preventing distractions. But since it was part of Teacher A's management style, it was not coded as a response to a distraction.

In summary, Teachers A and W spent the greatest part of their time dealing with student-generated distractions. It was concluded that this was because of the typically immature behavior of kindergarteners. When dealing with student-generated distractions, both teachers made extensive use of common coping techniques, such as Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND) and Coping Technique #21 (TEACHER USING BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES, AND/OR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS). These techniques took little time and were very effective in keeping students on task. Another common coping technique was Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING OR REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES). This technique took more time than the others, but like the others, was very effective for eliminating the distraction. Teachers A and W also used some coping techniques more or less often than the other. In the preceding paragraphs, these techniques were referred to as unique coping techniques. The uniqueness was due to different classroom management styles and standards.

DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGES

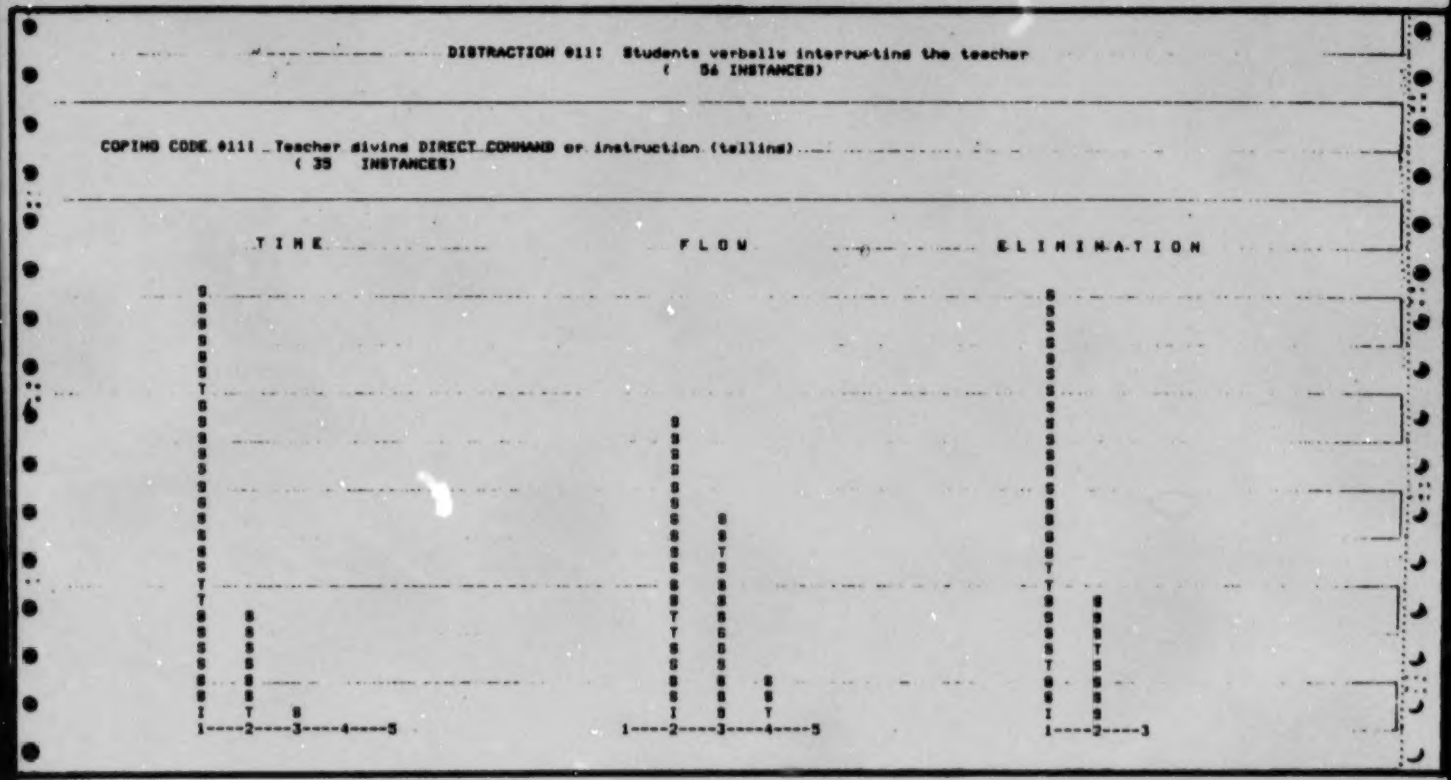
This section will discuss distraction-coping linkages. A distraction coping linkage is defined as the use of a specific coping technique in response to a specific distraction. The quantitative observer used a checklist to record the distractions and coping techniques used during the classroom observations (refer to Appendix C for the Quantitative Checklist). This checklist contained categories used to classify the effectiveness of the coping techniques. Effectiveness was defined in terms of three dimensions: (1) the instructional time lost due to the distraction, (2) the degree the instructional activity flow was interrupted, and (3) the degree to which the distraction was eliminated after a coping technique had been used. The information from the quantitative checklist was recorded on mark-sensed cards and input to a computer. The computer provided computer readouts containing this information. Refer to Figure 8 for a sample of a computer printout of "Time," "Flow," and "Elimination" histogram. Each letter indicates a student interrupting the teacher. The definitions for each rating these instances were given are shown below the appropriate histogram.

A coping technique was judged to be effective for "Time" if time was rated 1 or 2 (took less than 10 seconds); for "Flow" if flow was barely disrupted, was rated 1, 2, or 3 (minor distraction to both teacher and most students); and for "Elimination" if elimination was rated 1 (apparent elimination of distraction). Percents of effective coping techniques were calculated for "Time," "Flow," and "Elimination" using these criteria.

When reviewing the quantitative data, the aggregate of printouts for all teachers involved in this study showed that the teachers' direct

FIGURE 8

SAMPLE OF COMPUTER PRINTOUT
OF "TIME", "FLOW" AND "ELIMINATION" HISTOGRAMS



1 = LESS THAN 5 SECONDS
2 = 6 - 10 SECONDS
3 = 11 - 20 SECONDS
4 = 21 - 40 SECONDS
5 = MORE THAN 40 SECONDS

CODE: I=INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION
S=SMALL GROUP
L=LARGE GROUP
T=TRANSITIONAL TIME

1 = NO APPARENT BREAK IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL FLOW (DISTRACTION IGNORED)
2 = DISTRACTION MAINLY TO TEACHER; DOESN'T BOTHER STUDENTS
3 = MINOR DISTRACTION TO BOTH TEACHER AND MOST STUDENTS IN THE GROUP
4 = INSTRUCTION DISRUPTED, BUT TEACHER BRINGS THE GROUP BACK
5 = INSTRUCTION COMPLETELY DISRUPTED; VERY DIFFICULT OR NOT POSSIBLE TO BRING THE GROUP BACK TO TASK

1 = APPARENT ELIMINATION OF DISTRACTION
2 = DISTRACTION CONTINUES AT A REDUCED (ACCEPTABLE) LEVEL
3 = DISTRACTION CONTINUES AND TEACHER USES ANOTHER TECHNIQUE

command (Coping Technique #11) was the most frequently used coping technique for dealing with student-generated distractions. Teachers A's and W's computer printouts also substantiated this. During the nine observations, Teacher A used Coping Technique #11 34.4 percent of the time and Teacher W used it 53.4 percent for student-generated problems. It was also discovered that Teachers A and W had some common distraction-coping linkages. One common distraction-coping linkage was the use of Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND) in response to Distraction #11 (STUDENT INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER). Below is an example from the observer's notes of this linkage in Teacher A's room. The teacher is working with a group of students, and then:

> *Kenny walks over and says that he has to go to the bathroom. The teacher says, "Go," and he walks quietly to the bathroom.*

This kind of distraction was (Elimination Rating #1) 97 percent of the time for Teacher A and 98 percent for Teacher W. The distraction was mainly to the teacher and did not bother students. Teacher A had (Elimination Rating #2) 94 percent of the time and 84 percent for Teacher W. The distraction lasted less than 10 seconds for Teacher A 86 percent of the time and lasted less than 10 seconds 63 percent for Teacher W. Refer to Figure 9 for computer printouts that help illustrate the effectiveness of Distraction-Coping Linkage 11 - 11.

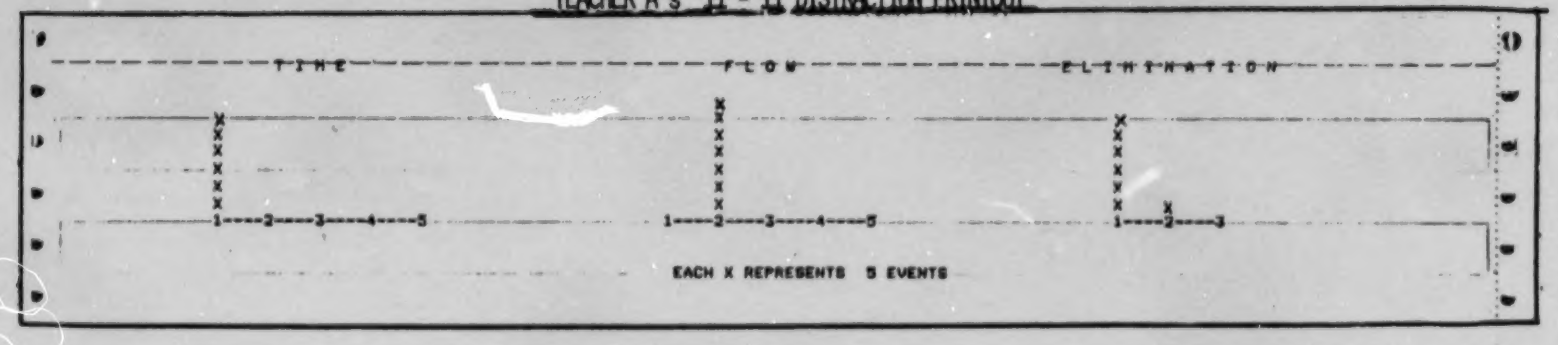
Teachers A and W had another common distraction-coping linkage. Both teachers had Distraction #13 (STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS WHICH ARE DISRUPTIVE) in their classrooms and dealt with it frequently using Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND). Below is an example of this linkage in Teacher W's room:

> *The teacher looks over to one of the work tables and says, "Matthew, I hear you; Todd, I hear you." Then she turns her attention back to the reading table.*

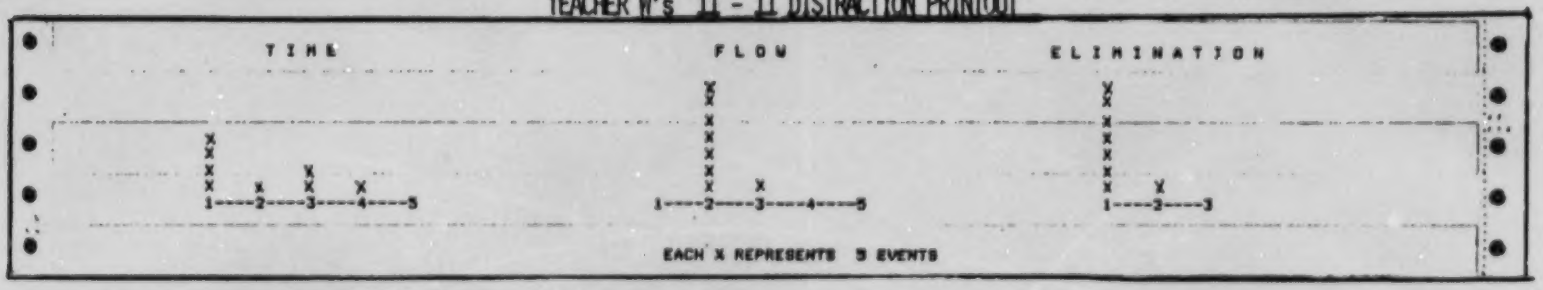
FIGURE 9

COMPUTER PRINTOUTS FOR DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 11-11*
FOR TEACHERS A AND W

TEACHER A's 11 - 11 DISTRACTION PRINTOUT



TEACHER W's 11 - 11 DISTRACTION PRINTOUT



*DISTRACTION -COPING LINKAGE 11-11 MEANS

DISTRACTION #11 STUDENTS VERBALLY INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER, COMBINED WITH COPING TECHNIQUE #11 TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND OR INSTRUCTION (TELLING)

The distraction was apparently eliminated (Elimination Rating #1) 81 percent of the time for Teacher A and 80 percent for Teacher W. The distraction was mainly to Teacher A (Flow Rating #2) 86 percent of the time and 88 percent for Teacher W. The distraction lasted less than 10 seconds for Teacher A 95 percent of the time and lasted less than 10 seconds 88 percent of the time for Teacher W. See Figure 10 for computer printouts that will help to illustrate the effectiveness of this linkage. Teacher W used Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING A DIRECT COMMAND OR INSTRUCTION) twice as often as Teacher A when dealing with Distraction #13 (STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS). The distraction was mainly to the teacher in both rooms. On the average, Teacher A used less time coping with the distraction.

Teachers A and W had another common distraction-coping linkage. When a Distraction #15 (STUDENTS NOT CONCENTRATING ON CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES) occurred, both teachers frequently used the Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND). Below is an example of this linkage from Teacher A's ethnographic data:

> *The teacher says, "Miles, if you are too tired to do what we are doing, get a resting rug now." Teacher compliments other children, then she says, "Miles, go put your head down, now." He gets up and walks to a work table and puts his head down.*

This distraction took the teachers off task less than 10 seconds (Time Ratings #1 and #2), was mainly to the teacher, and was apparently eliminated (Elimination Rating #1) the vast majority of the occurrences in which it was linked with Coping Technique #11. Refer to Figure 11 for computer printouts that show this information.

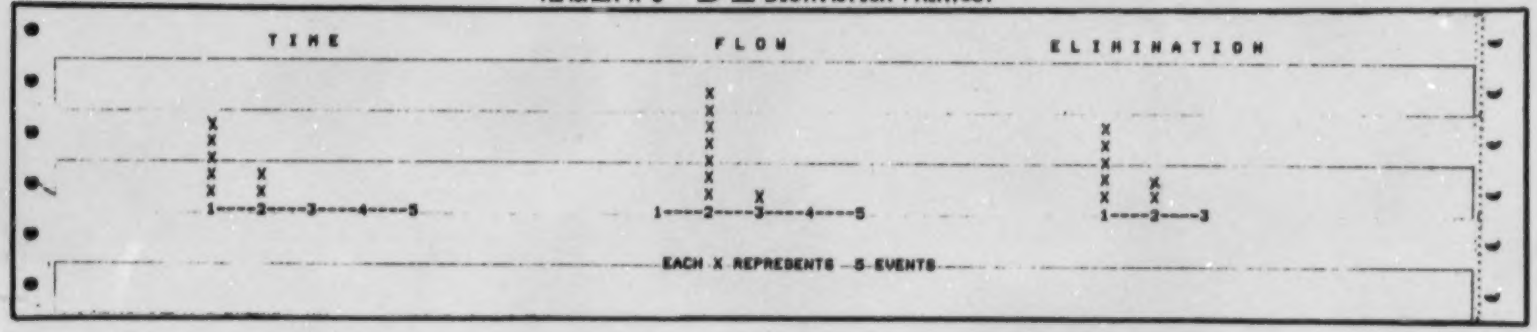
Again, Teachers A and W used the Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND) when resolving Distraction #16 (STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION). The following is an example of this linkage in Teacher W's room:

FIGURE 10

COMPUTER PRINTOUTS FOR DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 13-11*
FOR TEACHERS A AND W

TEACHER A's 13-11 DISTRACTION PRINTOUT

TEACHER W's 13-11 DISTRACTION PRINTOUT



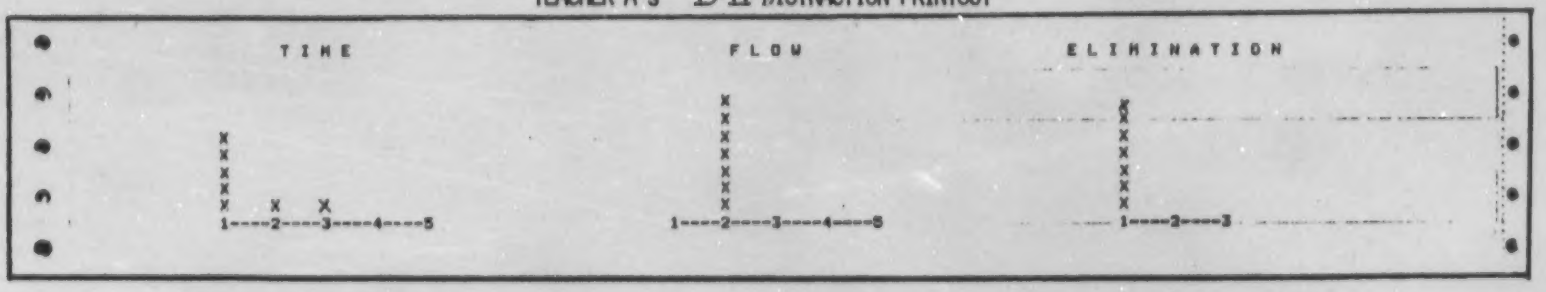
* DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 13-11 MEANS

DISTRACTION #13 STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS WHICH ARE DISRUPTIVE, COMBINED WITH COPING TECHNIQUE #11 TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND OR INSTRUCTION (TELLING)

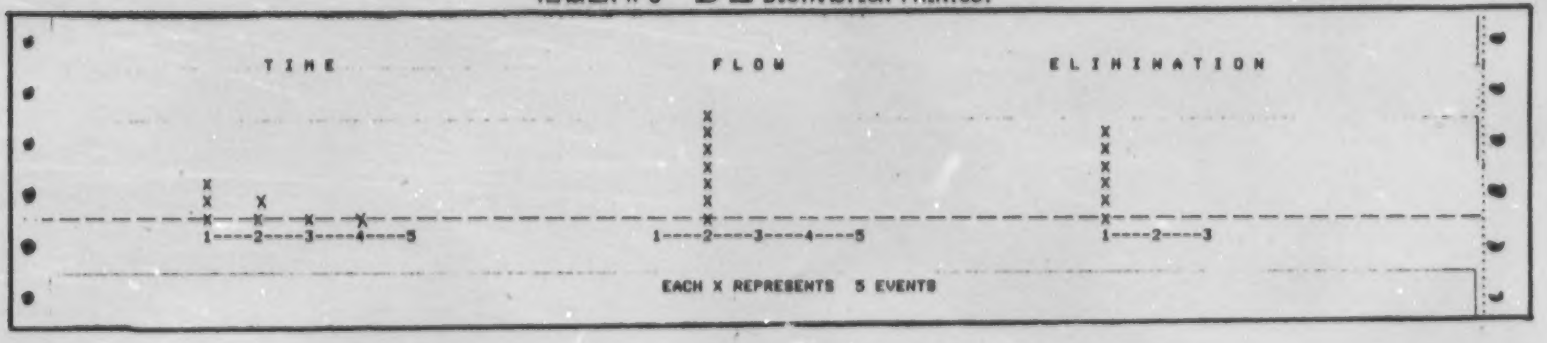
FIGURE 11

COMPUTER PRINTOUTS FOR DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 15-11*
FOR TEACHERS A AND W

TEACHER A's 15-11 DISTRACTION PRINTOUT



TEACHER W's 15-11 DISTRACTION PRINTOUT



*DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 15-11 MEANS

DISTRACTION #15 STUDENTS NOT CONCENTRATING ON CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES (NOT ON TASK), COMBINED WITH COPING TECHNIQUE #11 TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND OR INSTRUCTION (TELLING)

Phil gets up from the curved table and moves around. The teacher says, "Phil, come here, dear, why did you put your crayon away; you are not done. Go and get your crayon and finish your work."

Both teachers were successful when dealing with this distraction in less than 10 seconds, keeping the distraction mainly to the teacher and apparently eliminating the distraction. Refer to Figure 12 for computer printouts which illustrate these findings.

When analyzing the quantitative data for both teachers, it was found that some distraction-coping linkages occurred more often for Teacher A than for Teacher W.

Teacher A commonly used Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING OR REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES, "HOW IT SHOULD BE") when dealing with Distraction #13 (STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS). An example was:

Miles is sitting next to Corey. He talks to her. He raises hand and asks question. The teacher looks up and says, "If you were listening you would have heard."

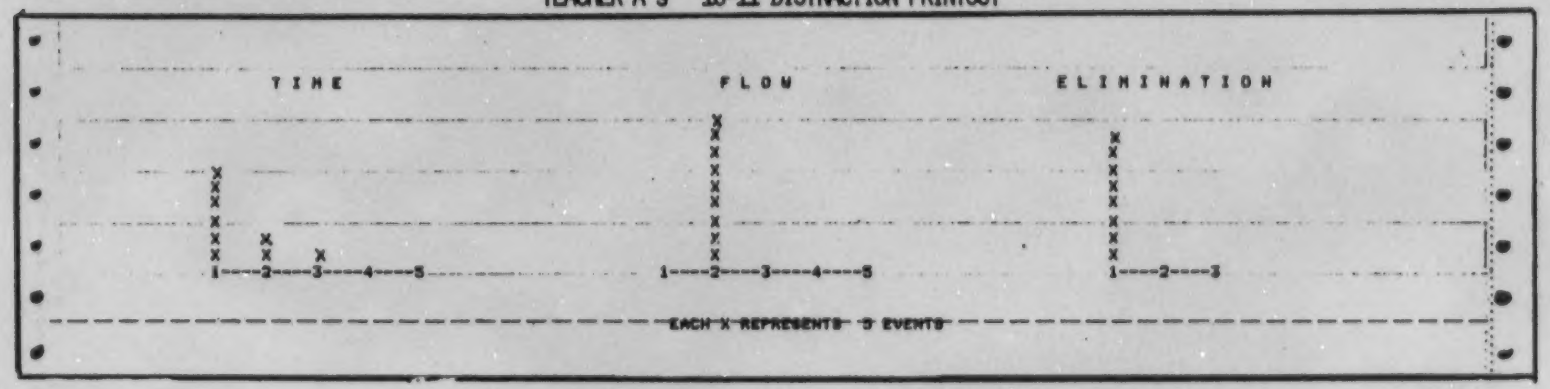
This coping technique seemed very effective. Coping Technique #13 showed a 100 percent success for apparent elimination of the student-generated distractions. In the "Flow" category, 87 percent of the time, Distraction #13 was mainly to the teacher. In 16 of the 22 instances in which Coping Technique #13 was used, children and teacher were off task less than 10 seconds. This data indicates that Coping Technique #13 was very effective in eliminating the distraction and preserving the flow of instruction. However, the teacher had to be willing to spend more time using this technique. Teacher A felt the time spent was worth the effort. Refer to Figure 13 for an example of a computer printout for Distraction-Coping Linkage 13 - 13.

Teacher A's teaching style was characterized by frequent use of

FIGURE 12

COMPUTER PRINTOUTS FOR DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 16-11*
FOR TEACHERS A AND W

TEACHER A's 16-11 DISTRACTION PRINTOUT

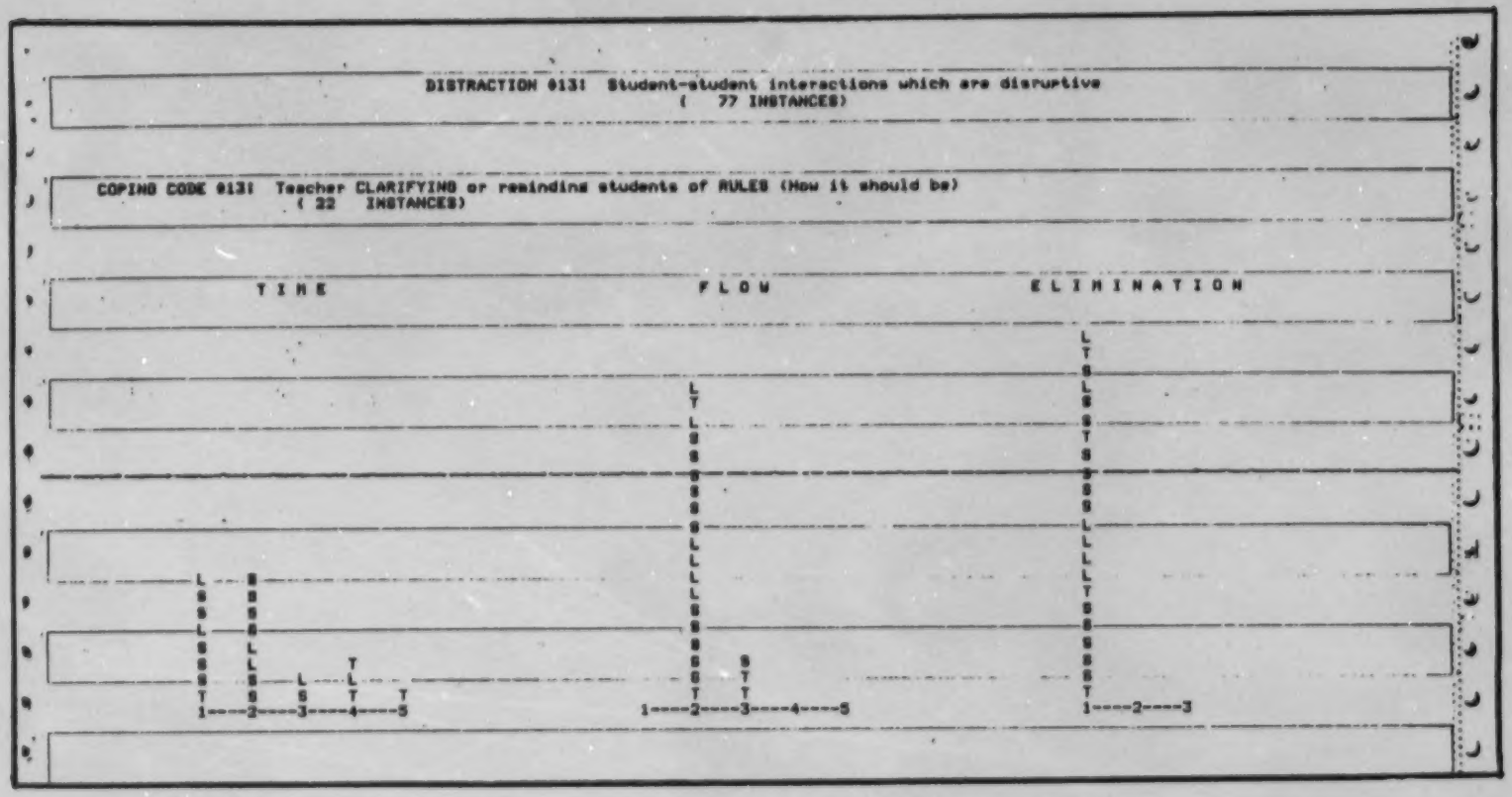


TEACHER W's 16-11 DISTRACTION PRINTOUT

*DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 16-11 MEANS
DISTRACTION #16 STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION, COMBINED WITH
COPING TECHNIQUE #11 TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND OR INSTRUCTION (TELLING)

FIGURE 13

COMPUTER PRINTOUT FOR DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 13-13
FOR TEACHER A



body language, gestures, and/or facial expressions (Coping Technique #21). This technique constituted 18.5 percent of Teacher A's use of the coping techniques. The technique was a coping technique she enjoyed using and tried to use as often as possible. This was illustrated in a quote from Teacher A's Daily Log. (Henceforth, "Daily Log" refers to answers to a set of questions which provided the teachers' perspective of the reading instruction for that day. Refer to Appendix D for the Teacher Daily Log.) The teacher stated in her Daily Log:

> *I feel that today my most successful coping technique was that of nonverbal, that of using my eyes, my hands, and getting children's attention. When I looked at them a certain way, they knew it was time to do their work or stop talking; or my hands, when I would have a child come sit with me I would sit there and rub their leg and let them know it was time to listen. It tells when it's time to listen but also is kind of a soothing process and many of these children are hyper and always moving. They need that soothing feeling and that feeling of security and of me accepting them for who they are.*

Teacher A's computer printouts illustrated the effectiveness of coping techniques when dealing with Distraction #14 (GENERAL STUDENT NOISE). This showed that Coping Technique #21 was very effective. Following is an example of this linkage.

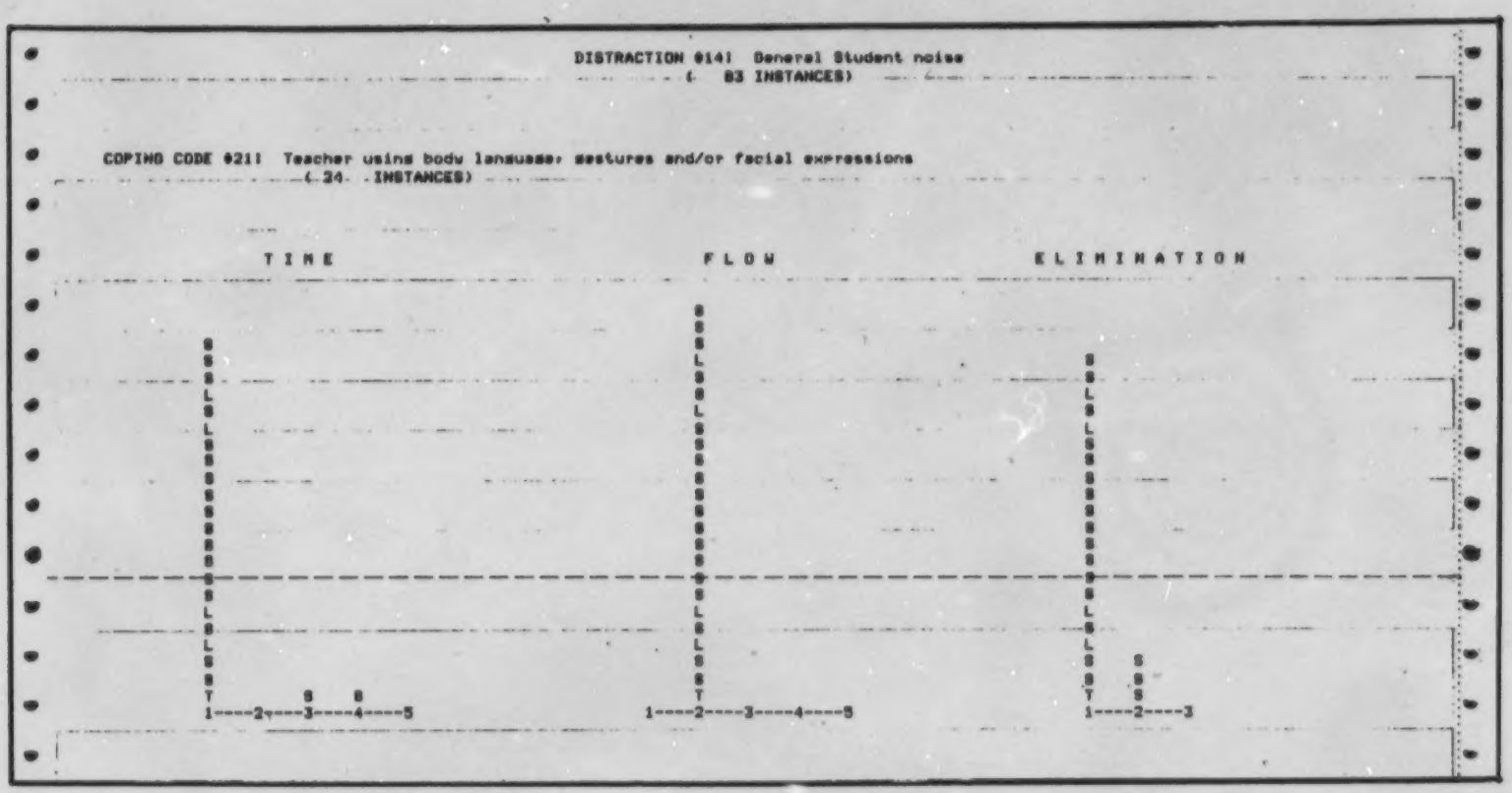
> *Students are whispering. Teacher looks and shakes head. (Students stopped whispering.)*

When the technique was used, 92 percent of the time the teacher was off task less than 10 seconds. Also, the distraction was solely to the teacher and did not bother the students, and the apparent elimination of the distraction was regular. Refer to Figure 14 for computer printout for Distraction-Coping Linkage 14 - 21.

Teacher A also used Coping Technique #21 (TEACHER USING BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES, AND/OR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS) when dealing with Distraction

FIGURE 14

COMPUTER PRINTOUT FOR DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 14-21
FOR TEACHER A



#16 (STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION). Below is an example of this linkage from observer's notes:

> *Paul is laying on rug. Teacher snaps her fingers. (Student sits up.)*

This coping technique showed 100 percent success for apparent elimination of this distraction. The distraction was totally to the teacher. Also, 96 percent of the 26 instances in which this coping technique was used, children and teacher were off task less than 10 seconds. Refer to Figure 15 for the computer printout for Distraction-Coping Linkage 16 - 21.

In conclusion, it can be stated Teachers A and W had many common distraction-coping linkages. These common linkages were mainly student-generated and were most frequently dealt with using Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER'S DIRECT COMMAND). Teacher W used Coping Technique #11 more often than Teacher A and was, on the average, off task longer than Teacher A. Refer to Figure 16 for computer printouts which illustrate the cumulative time ratings for Coping Technique #11 when dealing with "student-generated" distractions for Teachers A and W.

Analysis of ethnographic data showed that Teacher A's direct command usually consisted of just calling out a child's name to stop a distraction. Teacher W would call out a child's name, but would also follow with a statement telling what that child should be doing. This is illustrated by a quote from Teacher W's ethnographic notes.

> *The teacher looks over to the rug and calls Linda twice. Linda comes to the teacher. The teacher says, "Sit down a minute." Linda stands by the teacher and the teacher says, "I heard you yell twice, take care of yourself, do what you are doing more quietly." Then the teacher goes and puts a record on the record player.*

FIGURE 15

COMPUTER PRINTOUT FOR DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGE 16-21
FOR TEACHER A

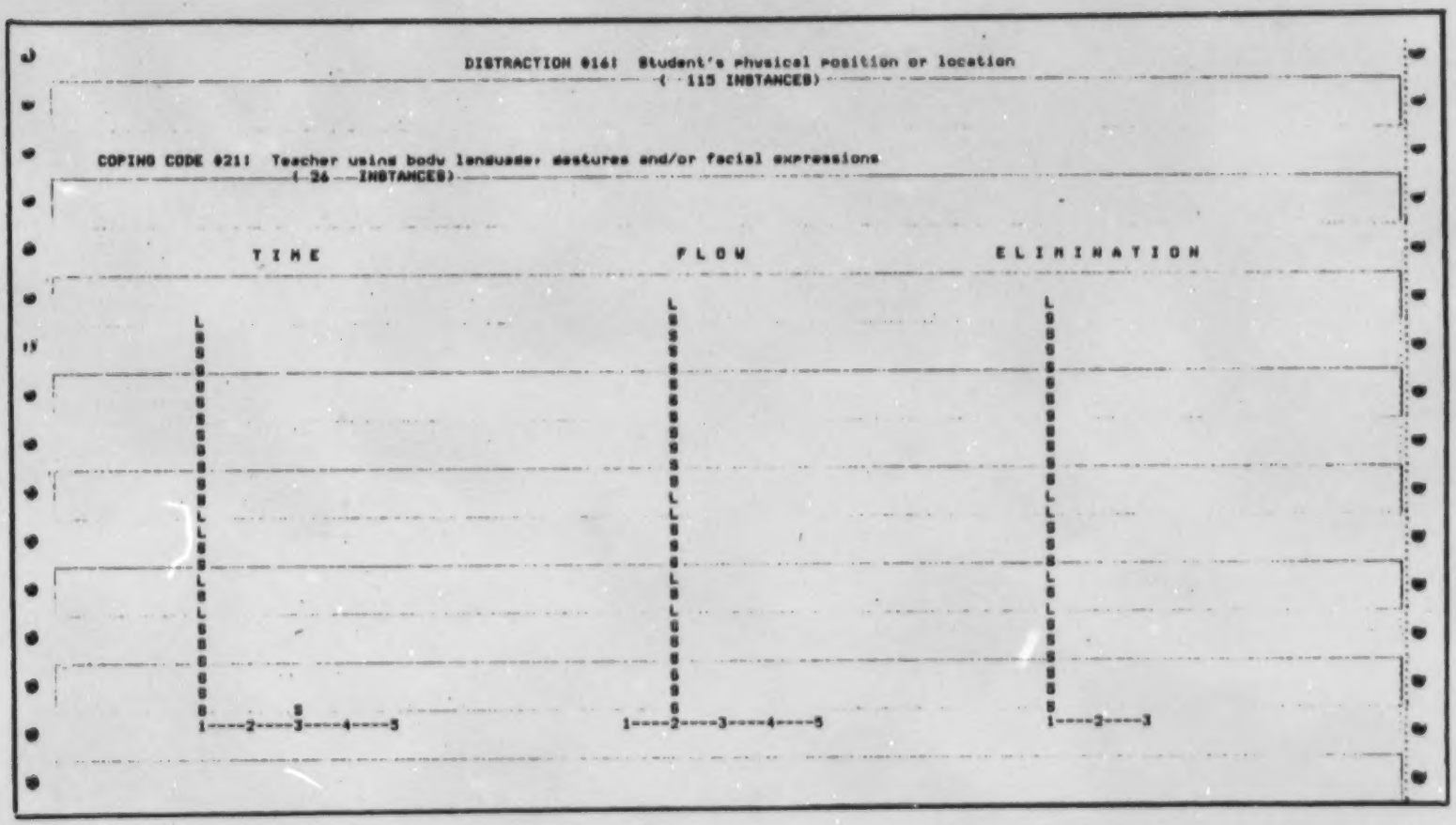
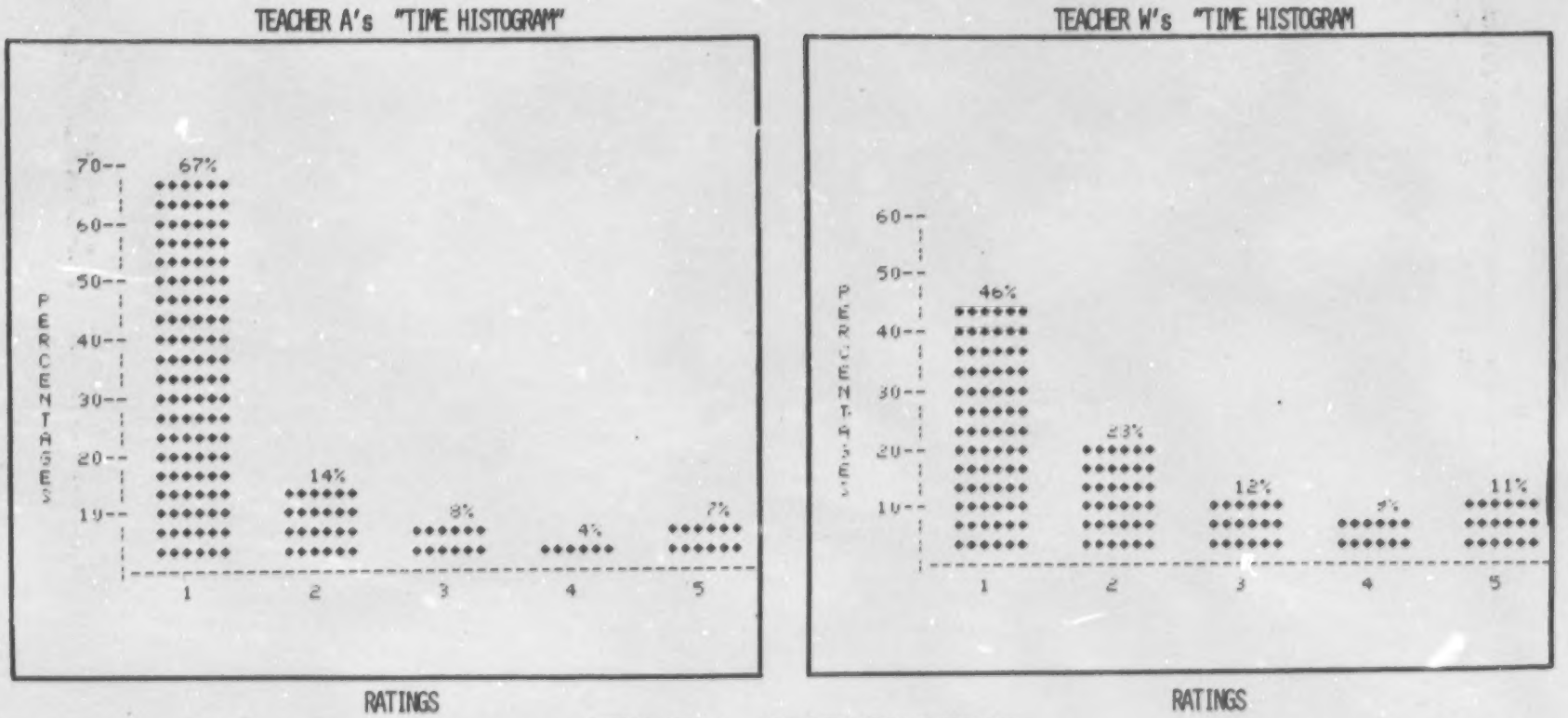


FIGURE 16

COMPUTER PRINTOUT FOR DURATION OF STUDENT GENERATED DISTRACTIONS
WITH COPING TECHNIQUE #11
FOR TEACHERS A AND W
(9 OBSERVATIONS)



RATING CODE:
1 = LESS THAN 5 SECONDS
2 = 6 - 10 SECONDS
3 = 11 - 20 SECONDS
4 = 21 - 40 SECONDS
5 = MORE THAN 40 SECONDS

Teacher A showed use of more varied coping techniques when dealing with distractions. Teacher A used Coping Technique #21 (TEACHER USING BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES, AND/OR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS) when coping with Distraction #14 (GENERAL STUDENT NOISE) and Distraction #16 (STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION). Both distractions were effectively eliminated in a small amount of time with little disruption to instruction.

Teacher A also used Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING OR REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES) when dealing with Distraction #13 (STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS WHICH ARE DISRUPTIVE). Again, this distraction was effectively eliminated with little disruption to instruction. However, the duration of distraction was a bit longer for this distraction. Teacher A felt this extra time spent was worth its favorable effect on flow of instruction and elimination of distractions.

INTERVENTION PLANS

After the sixth classroom observation, two inservice meetings were held for all eight teachers whose classrooms were being observed. During the meetings, the teachers were given information about the distractions which occurred most often in their classrooms. The teachers discussed the coping techniques they found to be most effective in dealing with these distractions. Each teacher then made a plan to choose the specific distractions she wanted to work on and the coping techniques she would use to try to eliminate those distractions during the last three observations.

Teacher A

After reviewing her personal "Distraction Profile," Teacher A made note of her most frequent distractions and those which occurred more often

on her profile than on the total "Distraction Profile" (included all eight teachers' data). The first distraction she chose to work on was Distraction #13 (INTERACTION BETWEEN STUDENTS).

Teacher A decided to emphasize two coping techniques. The first was Coping Technique #21 (TEACHER USING BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES, AND/OR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS). She conferenced with two boys, Mike and Evan, and told them that every time they interacted with other students, she would give them a signal to stop misbehaving. Evan's signal was for Teacher A to pull on her ear. Mike's signal would be for Teacher A to wink her eye.

Analysis of ethnographic and qualitative data showed that the observers only noted Teacher A pulling her ear two times and never winking at all during the three observations. However, her teacher's daily logs indicated that Teacher A had used these as coping techniques. Possibly, the observers were unaware that the signals were used as coping techniques. Teacher A felt that the signal technique was effective for about eight school days. She felt very good about using the technique as noted in her daily log.

> *It keeps me from having to keep calling his name out, bringing attention to his bad behavior and it is a positive way to let Evan know that he is not behaving like he should be and it doesn't distract everyone else that are trying to do their work.*

Because of its effectiveness, Teacher A has indicated that she plans to use the technique again. Next year, she will use a succession of different signals with a child. If one becomes ineffective, she will use a new and different sign.

Teacher A also used Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING OR REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES) to deal with Distraction #13. The "Glasser Contract" concept was used by Teacher A to clarify rules. She asked a

student three questions: "What are you doing?" "Is what you're doing helping us or you?" "What could you do instead?"

This technique was not evident in the collected data. Teacher A found that this technique was time consuming. She did not use it often during instructional periods for this reason. She did use it at recess and at work time. These periods were more flexible and allowed for the teacher to take more time eliminating problems.

Teacher A also decided to work on Distraction #14 (GENERAL STUDENT NOISE), using a variety of coping techniques such as Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING RULES), Coping Technique #21 (USING BODY GESTURES), Coping Technique #11 (GIVING DIRECT COMMANDS), and Coping Technique #12 (USING POSITIVE COMPLIMENTING FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR). The collected data did not evidence any increase in usage of these coping techniques.

Distraction #16 (STUDENT PHYSICAL POSTION OR LOCATION) was also another distraction the teacher chose. In an effort to eliminate this distraction, Teacher A used the following coping techniques: Coping Technique #11 (GIVING DIRECT COMMANDS), Coping Technique #12 (COMPLIMENTING FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR), and Coping Technique #23 (PHYSICALLY REDIRECTING STUDENT'S ATTENTION). After investigating the collected data, it was concluded that there was no increase in the use of these coping techniques.

In summary, Teacher A stated that she made a concentrated effort to use Coping Technique #21 by using a predetermined signal to eliminate negative behavior for two boys. This may explain why there was little time used for the other coping techniques, and why the collected data did not evidence any increase in usage. Teacher A also indicated that she thought three observations were too few to determine if there was any change in her coping style.

Teacher W

After reviewing the data collected during the first six observations, Teacher W reflected upon the changes she wanted to make in her coping style. She felt one of her greatest needs in the classroom was finding more effective ways to deal with three particular children who had exceptional problems in self-control. Because of the impressive statistics the data revealed about Coping Technique #21 (TEACHER USING BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES, AND/OR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS), she chose to use this technique more frequently.

She resolved to try using signals with two of the three children who had severe problems in self-control. She privately gave each child his/her personal signal, and explained that it was to help that child try harder in caring for himself/herself. (A slight tug of the ear was used as a signal for one boy. A casual scratch of the nose was used to signal a girl. Both signals were accompanied by strong eye contact when administered.) Teacher W hoped that a more consistent use of Coping Technique #21 would eliminate the frequent distractions caused by these two children more quickly and effectively than techniques she had previously used.

In addition to the nonverbal signaling, Teacher W resolved to use Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING RULES) more often with these three children, in particular, when a verbal response to a distraction seemed more appropriate than a nonverbal response. One of the the three children had a problem with extreme temper tantrums. Teacher W did not assign him a signal, but rather hoped to minimize and control his tantrums through closer home contact and relocation, when necessary. Teacher W resolved to use Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING RULES) more frequently and consistently with this child, reminding him of the rules and what the

alternatives were if he did not control his behavior.

Quantitative data, after the final three observations, showed no striking differences that could be attributed to the intervention plans. The use of Coping Technique #13 was up only slightly (from 14 percent to 14.4 percent), and the use of Coping Technique #21 was down from 12.6 percent to 6.3 percent.

Teacher W felt that three observations were too brief a period of time to realistically expect significant changes in the data. However, Teacher W personally felt a certain amount of success in her efforts to improve the self-control of the three children mentioned above. On the evening of the seventh observation, Teacher W noted in her daily log, with regard to her most successful coping technique of the day:

> *I have been really pleased the last two days with Kelly. I had worked out a little signal that I wanted to try to use with her. I discussed it with her yesterday morning before school and it worked really well today. She is just really responding to it. When I see her not taking care of herself or not attending to her task, or just wiggling all over the place, I scratch my nose a little bit and look her right in the eye. She has settled right down when I've had to do it the last couple of days and she just seems to be wanting to try harder and to have more self-control. I really feel the signal has worked well with her these last two days.*

In the same daily log, Teacher W noted having little success using the same technique with Daniel:

> *I had given him a different signal, a little tug of the ear. I had taken some time and discussed privately with him what I was doing and why . . . that I wanted to see more self-control out of him . . . it didn't work well yesterday and it didn't work at all today. He just paid no attention to it and he could have cared less. Finally, the only thing that really seemed to work with him was when all the other children finished their work and he was all by himself.*

In the daily log, after the eighth observation, Teacher W reported having continued success in using a signal with Kelly:

Kelly continued to show a lot of improvement today. I had to use the signal over twice, and again she responded to it. She really seems to want to show more self-control. The minute I used the signal, she shaped right up. I had a talk with my aide after school today . . . Kelly has been typically uncooperative with her where she has been so cooperative with me. I can't help but think that she likes the personal nature of the signal; it seems to be a personal agreement between us, a very private thing, and I think that she likes this.

And in the same daily log, she said of her signaling of Daniel:

He had a much better day today. Who knows whether it is due to the talk we had before worktime . . . I don't know. I didn't use the signal with him at all today. I forgot, and maybe I forgot because it didn't work yesterday.

Although changes in behavior were not noted by the observers, Teacher W felt that an important positive change had occurred in the behavior of Kelly due to the use of the signaling technique. The signal did not prove to be effective with Daniel and Teacher W continued to try other techniques with him. Teacher W also felt successful after more consistent use of clarifying and reminding of the third child with the problem of temper tantrums. Teacher W felt that his tantrums definitely were under more control. This was not measurable in the data, as his tantrums never occurred when the observers were in the room. Teacher W concluded that Coping Techniques #13 and #21 are easy techniques to try and are potentially very effective.

TIME LOST DUE TO DISTRACTIONS

At the beginning of this study, when the Level I participating teachers, the researcher, and the trainer/developer were brainstorming to determine what kind of question to research, they read many research papers.

One research paper that proved interesting was a study by Berliner,* which addressed the concept of "time on task." It was concluded that the amount of learning was related to the time on task. That is, the more time on meaningful learning tasks, the more learning. When composing the quantitative checklist, three categories for evaluating the effectiveness of coping techniques were created. The first category was designed to show the amount of time students and teacher were off task; the second, how much the distraction interrupted the flow of instruction; and the third, to what degree was the distraction eliminated. The information from this checklist was recorded on mark-sensed cards and input to a computer. For the analysis, Teachers A and W were provided with a computer readout.

In the evenings following each observation, Teachers A and W each tape recorded a teacher's log. For this log, each teacher answered a set of questions which provided a perspective of the reading instruction for that day. One question asked the teacher to estimate how much instruction time she thought had been lost due to distractions.

Teachers A and W reviewed those two sources, the daily logs, and the quantitative data. Based on her teacher's log during the nine observations, Teacher A estimated that she lost between five to seven minutes of instruction per day. Teacher W estimated that she lost between 17 to 20 minutes per day coping with distractions. Using a mid-range estimate, the quantitative data showed that Teacher A lost an average of approximately 10 minutes per observation and Teacher W lost an average of 14

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* Berliner, D. C. and Roseshine, B. V. The acquisition of knowledge in the classroom. Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study, technical report series. San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1977.

minutes per observation.

Because of the range of the rating intervals (i.e., a "2" rating could be as brief as six seconds or as long as ten seconds), if one only considered the low-range estimates, the time loss for Teacher A would be as low as six minutes, and for Teacher W as low as ten minutes for each observation. On the other hand, if one considered the high-range estimates, the time loss for Teacher A would be as high as 16 minutes and for Teacher W it would be as high as 23 minutes. However, the mid-range estimates of 10 minutes for Teacher A and 14 minutes for Teacher W are perhaps the most representative of the actual time lost.

It can be concluded that on a typical observation day, 10 out of 55 minutes of instruction was lost due to distractions in Teacher A's room, and 14 out of 59 minutes was lost in Teacher W's room. Teacher A used 18 percent of her reading instruction time to cope with distractions. Teacher W coped with distractions during 24 percent of her reading period.

TIME LOST DUE TO COPING WITH DISTRACTIONS

INFORMATION	TEACHER A	TEACHER W
Average of time lost (teacher's estimate)	6 min.	19 min.
Average of time lost (quantitative data)	10 min.	14 min.
Average number of minutes per observation	55 min.	59 min.
Percent of instructional time lost as a result of distraction (quantitative data)	18%	24%

It should be remembered that Teachers A and W were working with kindergarten children who, by their nature, are spontaneous, impulsive, and have short attention spans. This helps to explain why these teachers spent such a high percentage of their instructional time coping with distractions.

When reviewing Teacher A's and Teacher W's histograms for Flow of Instruction in all nine observations, it was noted that 92 percent of the time for Teacher A and 83 percent of the time for Teacher W, the distraction was rated as a 2. This means the distraction was mainly to the teacher and did not bother the students. Both teachers were successful in keeping the distraction to a minimum and not letting it disturb the students (see Figure 17).

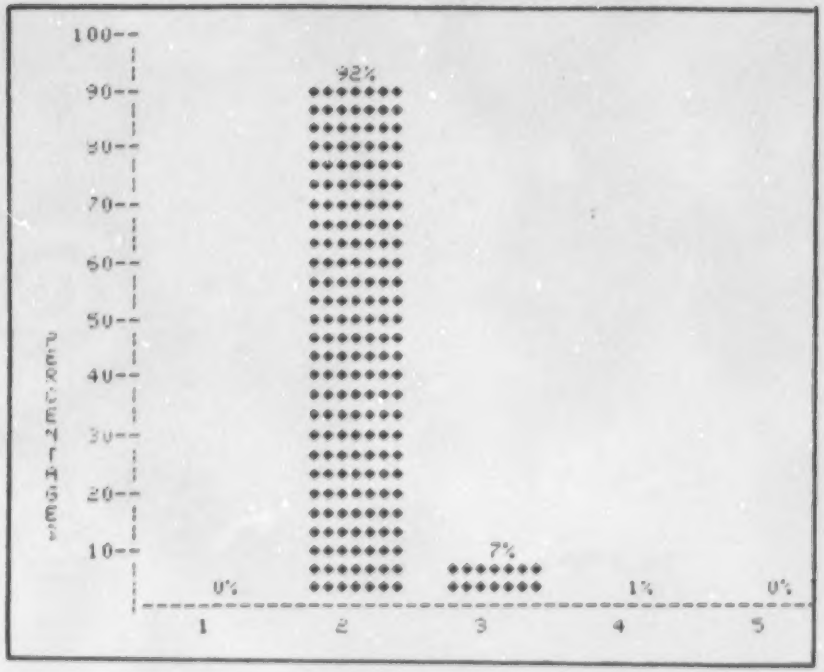
Histograms on elimination for both Teachers A and W warrant additional analysis. The histogram for Teacher A shows that 93 percent of her distractions were rated as 1 (distraction apparently eliminated). Four percent of her distractions were rated 2 (distractions continued at a reduced level). Two percent of the distractions were rated as 3 (teacher had to resort to using a new coping technique). The histogram for Teacher W shows that 80 percent of her distractions were apparently eliminated, and 17 percent continued at a reduced level. For the remaining 3 percent, she had to resort to using a new coping technique (see Figure 18).

As previously noted in the section on Distraction-Coping Linkages, Teacher A used a greater variety of coping techniques than Teacher W. Both observers indicated that Teacher A's wider variety of coping techniques could have been a factor in her somewhat more successful distraction elimination profile. It is possible that children may learn to ignore a

FIGURE 17

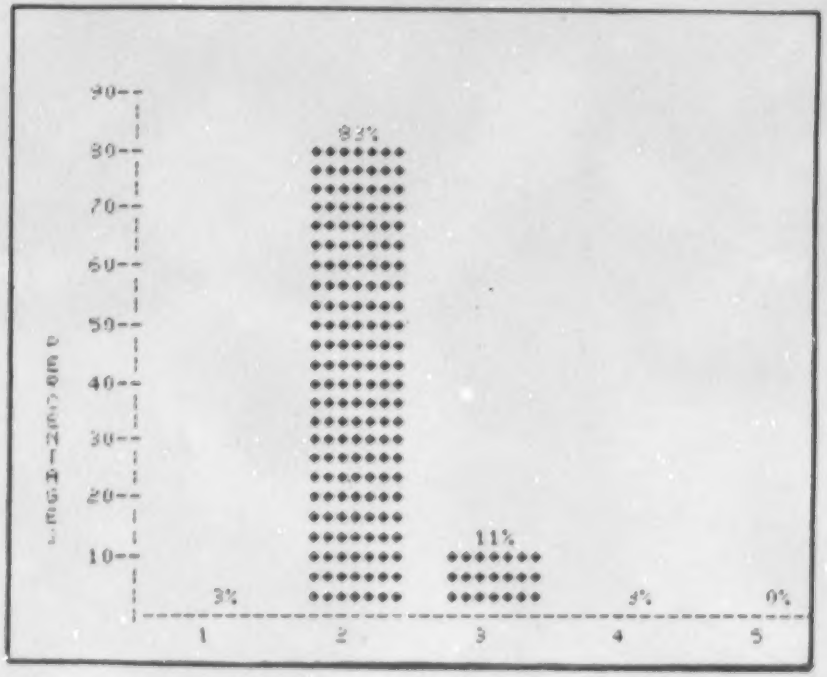
COMPUTER PRINTOUT FOR FLOW OF INSTRUCTION
FOR TEACHERS A AND W
(9 OBSERVATIONS)

TEACHER A's "FLOW HISTOGRAM"



RATINGS

TEACHER W's "FLOW HISTOGRAM"

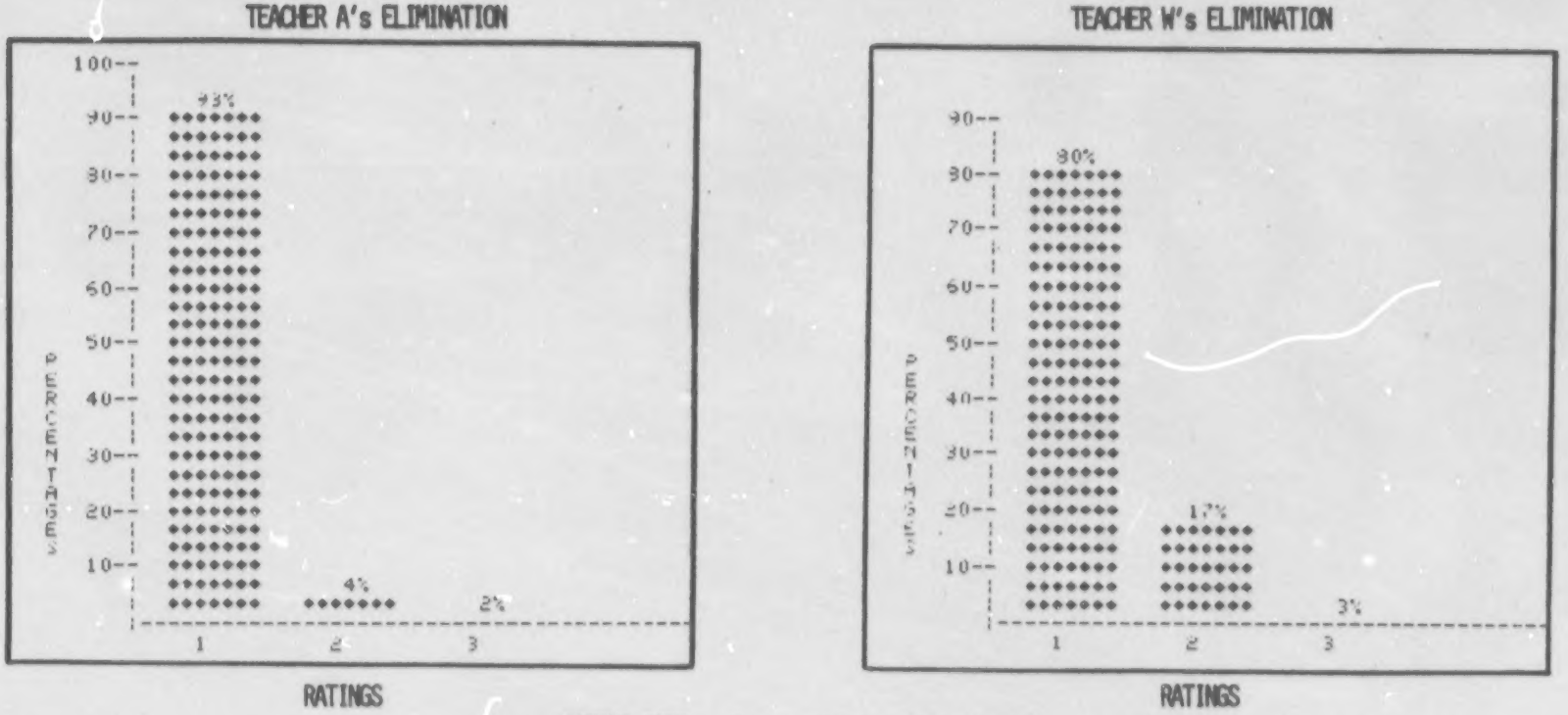


RATINGS

RATING CODE:
1 = NO APPARENT BREAK IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL FLOW (DISTRACTION IGNORED)
2 = DISTRACTION MAINLY TO TEACHER; DOESN'T BOTHER STUDENTS
3 = MINOR DISTRACTION TO BOTH TEACHER AND MOST STUDENTS IN THE GROUP
4 = INSTRUCTION DISRUPTED, BUT TEACHER BRINGS THE GROUP BACK
5 = INSTRUCTION COMPLETELY DISRUPTED; VERY DIFFICULT OR NOT POSSIBLE TO BRING THE GROUP BACK TO TASK

FIGURE 18

COMPUTER PRINTOUTS FOR ELIMINATION OF DISTRACTIONS
FOR TEACHERS A AND W
(9 OBSERVATIONS)



RATING CODE:
1 = APPARENT ELIMINATION OF DISTRACTION
2 = DISTRACTION CONTINUES AT A REDUCED (ACCEPTABLE) LEVEL
3 = DISTRACTION CONTINUES AND TEACHER USES ANOTHER TECHNIQUE

frequently used coping technique and continue with their distraction. For this reason, a variety of coping techniques may be more successful in eliminating distractions than a single technique used frequently.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

FINDINGS AND DISTRACTION CONCLUSIONS

Teachers A and W were most frequently interrupted by student-generated distractions. Both teachers felt this was due to the typically immature behavior of kindergarteners.

Teacher W's highest distraction frequency was Distraction #11 (TEACHER INTERRUPTED BY STUDENTS). The second highest distraction frequency was Distraction #14 (GENERAL STUDENT NOISE). Distraction #16 (STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION) had the third highest frequency rate for Teacher W.

The three distractions with the highest frequency for Teacher A were the same as Teacher W's, but ranked in a different order. Distraction #16 (STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION) had the highest frequency rate in Teacher A's room. Distraction #14 (GENERAL STUDENT NOISE) and Distraction #11 (TEACHER FREQUENTLY INTERRUPTED BY STUDENTS) tied for second for frequency of occurrence in Teacher A's room.

FINDINGS - COPING TECHNIQUES

Teachers A and W used some common coping techniques to deal with their distractions. For both teachers, the most frequently used technique was Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND). The coping technique with the second highest frequency for Teacher W was #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING OR REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES). Coping Technique #21 (TEACHER USING NONVERBAL BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES) had the third highest frequency in Teacher W's room. The second and third most frequently used coping techniques in Teacher A's room were the same as for Teacher W. However,

the second highest frequency in Teacher A's room was Coping Technique #21 and the third highest frequency was Coping Technique #13.

CONCLUSIONS

Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER USING DIRECT COMMAND) and Coping Technique #21 (TEACHER USING NONVERBAL BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES) took little time and were most effective in eliminating the distractions. Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING OR REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES) took more time than other techniques, but the teachers felt that this could be justified by its effectiveness.

FINDINGS - DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGES

During data analysis it was found that Teachers A and W also had some common distraction-coping linkages (defined as the use of a specific coping technique in response to a specific distraction). One common distraction-coping linkage was the use of Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND) in response to Distraction #11 (STUDENT INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER). Both teachers had good elimination of the distraction. The distraction was mainly to the teacher. The distraction usually lasted less than 10 seconds in Teacher A's room and a little longer in Teacher W's room.

Another common distraction-coping linkage was Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND) used in response to Distraction #13 (STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS WHICH ARE DISRUPTIVE). Teacher W used the direct command twice as often as Teacher A when dealing with student-student interactions. In both rooms, the distraction was mainly to the teacher. Teacher A used less time coping with the distraction and had better elimination.

Teachers A and W had another common distraction-coping linkage. When a Distraction #15 (STUDENTS NOT CONCENTRATING ON CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES) occurred, both teachers frequently used Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND). The teachers had good elimination of the distraction, which was mainly to the teacher in both rooms. However, Teacher A spent less time dealing with this distraction than Teacher W.

When resolving Distraction #16 (STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION), Teachers A and W both used Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND). Both teachers had good elimination of the distraction. The distraction was kept mainly to the teacher and eliminating the distraction took less than 10 seconds.

Analysis of the quantitative data for both teachers showed that Teacher A used some distraction-coping linkages more often than Teacher W. Teacher A used Coping Technique #13 (TEACHER CLARIFYING OR REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES) when dealing with Distraction #13 (STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS). This coping technique was 100 percent successful in eliminating the distraction. The distraction was mainly to the teacher 87 percent of the time. This coping technique did take a little more time than others, but 73 percent of the time the children were off task less than 10 seconds. Teacher A felt the time spent was worth the effectiveness of the coping technique.

Teacher A used Coping Technique #21 (NONVERBAL BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES) when dealing with Distraction #14 (GENERAL STUDENT NOISE). There was 88 percent apparent elimination of this distraction, which took less than 10 seconds 100 percent of the time. Also, the distraction was mainly to the teacher.

When dealing with Distraction #16 (STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION), Teacher A used Coping Technique #21 (TEACHER USING BODY LANGUAGE, GESTURES). This coping technique showed 100 percent success for apparent elimination of this distraction. The distraction was totally to the teacher. Also, 96 percent of the instances in which this coping technique was used, children were off task less than 10 seconds.

Based on her experience with Coping Technique #21, Teacher A concluded that this technique was most effective when used with groups small and large who were receiving instruction from the teacher. The teacher must have eye contact with a child to effectively use body language/gestures and/or facial expressions. Also, a child must be in close proximity so that the teacher can touch the child to get him back on task. It should be noted that the frequency of this technique was affected by the teacher's mood and physical condition for the day. In the morning on a day when the teacher felt "more energetic and freshened," she used a variety of nonverbal gestures, wherein on an afternoon when she was tired, the direct command was simpler and didn't require as much patience and thought.

An analysis of Teacher A's data indicated the highest frequency for the direct command (Coping Technique #11) occurred on a day when the teacher was tired. On the same day, nonverbal gestures (Coping Technique #21) had the second to the lowest frequency number. The following exerpt from Teacher A's log seems to substantiate this information:

> *As far as my mood and physical condition for today--the children were complaining today that they were a bit tired. I had a friend that flew in on a plane, so I didn't get to bed as early as I should have. So I was a bit tired. This may have affected my mood or physical condition. I know that I didn't get to have breakfast and my stomach got a little nauseated, I think the children were not doing well with the warm weather, because they are complaining of being tired.*

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that Teachers A and W had many common distraction-coping linkages. The distractions were mainly student generated and were dealt with using Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND). Teachers A and W were effective in eliminating these distractions. Teachers A and W used Coping Technique #11. Teacher W used it more often and took longer to eliminate the distraction. Teacher A's direct command usually consisted of just calling out a child's name to stop a distraction. Teacher W would call out the child's name and then follow with a statement telling what that child should be doing. This seems to explain the differences in time off task for the two teachers. The increased time Teacher W used with direct command also may explain why the disruption to the flow of instruction was a little more in her room.

Teacher A showed use of more varied coping techniques when dealing with distractions. As previously noted in the time lost section, both observers indicated that Teacher A's wider variety of coping techniques could have been a factor in her somewhat more successful distraction elimination profile. It is possible that children may learn to ignore a frequently used coping technique and continue with their distraction. Thus, it appears that a variety of coping techniques is more successful in eliminating distractions than a single technique used frequently.

TEACHER A'S INSIGHTS

In this section, Teacher A will give her insights concerning her involvement in this research project. She found it most difficult to name the most important effect of this study for her. The significant effects were many.

Before participating in this study, Teacher A viewed educational research as a process that took a lot of time and money. She questioned its value for the classroom teacher. With the innovation of teacher participation in research and her involvement in this study, Teacher A now views educational research in more positive terms.

Teachers selected the study question which increased the validity and potential for positively affecting classroom teachers. Teachers assisted in developing the research design so that the question could be hopefully observed in a naturalistic environment. The study was analyzed by the teacher participants. A professional researcher and a trainer-developer worked directly with the team to give the very necessary guidance regarding research techniques. Professional researchers from Far West Laboratory also provided technical assistance throughout the research project.

Teacher A, being new to research, found it a necessity to have this kind of guidance. Many times, she found herself frustrated and not confident in her direction during the analysis and writing stages. Teacher A does not view herself as a good writer. Fortunately, with the assistance of professional writers, this study will be readable. After completion of this study, Teacher A felt a real satisfaction in her new role as a participant in research. She also felt satisfaction in that teachers are

capable of meaningful involvement in educational research. Before this study, Teacher A thought that she usually was aware of the distractions occurring in her classroom. Through the study, she became even more aware of her classroom distractions and the coping techniques. Her typical teaching style involved the use of many preventative techniques. However, she found herself using them on a more conscious level during and following the study. The quantitative checklist for data collection included a category for recording preventative coping techniques. Analysis of this data for Teacher A showed that she only used these preventative techniques 2.6 percent during the observations. To get a more valid picture of these preventative techniques, Teacher A would like to see the study started in the fall and continue through the spring. Then a comparison or contrast of the distractions occurring in the fall and during the spring could be made. Also, the observers would then be more aware of the preventative techniques that are ongoing in the classroom. It is highly possible that some distractions occurring in the fall would no longer be present in the spring. This would give a more realistic picture of the effectiveness of certain coping techniques.

Data analysis showed that the most frequently used coping technique by all six participating teachers was Coping Technique #11 (TEACHER GIVING DIRECT COMMAND). Before the study, Teacher A felt uneasy that she used this technique so often. Analysis showed that this technique was very effective in dealing with distractions. Teacher A felt comforted that it was an effective technique and that it was also used frequently by all the teachers.

During the intervention sessions, Teacher A chose to work on

student-generated distractions. She felt comfortable using nonverbal coping techniques. Thus, she decided to use a signal technique with two of her students. This technique is explained in the intervention section. Data analysis showed no significant use of this technique or significant change in the students' behavior. Teacher A felt this was due to the short time span after the intervention. A total of three observations cannot effectively reveal the effectiveness of this technique. Teacher A will use this technique next year. She will make a few modifications, such as using a succession of different signals with a child. If one signal becomes ineffective, she will use a new signal. Teacher A suggests additional observations after the intervention sessions. This would give the teacher a chance to become more comfortable with her new techniques. It also would better show any changes in coping style.

Data analysis showed Teacher A used a more variety of coping techniques than Teacher W. Both teachers had good elimination of their distractions. But Teacher A spent less time coping. Teacher A feels this is an important insight because it seems to illustrate that children sometimes ignore a frequently used technique. Thus, a variety of coping techniques may be more successful in eliminating distractions than a single technique used frequently.

Teacher A would like to rewrite the classifications for the quantitative checklist. Analysis of the quantitative data showed Teacher A using Coping Technique #23 (TEACHER PHYSICALLY REDIRECTING STUDENT'S ATTENTION) only 2.4 percent during the observations. The observers often mentioned the use of this technique by teacher A. Teacher A also felt she used this technique frequently. Due to the limitations of the checklist,

these subtle techniques were not accurately recorded.

Again, after conferencing with the observers, it was noted that Teacher A frequently used Coping Technique #15 (TEACHER USING VARYING PATTERNS OR CLUES TO GAIN STUDENT ATTENTION OR APPROPRIATE STUDENT ACTION). Teacher A used many finger plays to keep children on task, which was recorded as Coping Technique #15. This coping technique was not discussed in the distraction-coping linkage section because it was spread across the board for distractions. None of the distractions had enough instances where Coping Technique #15 was used to merit discussion. However, of the 21 different kinds of distractions observed in Teacher A's room, seven, at some time were dealt with by Coping Technique #15. Teacher A feels it is valuable to have a technique that can be used for such a variety of distractions in a kindergarten classroom. Of course, this technique would not be appropriate for students at higher grade levels.

Teacher A will continue to use her Coping Technique #11 because of its effectiveness, but will try to use many nonverbal coping techniques as well. She enjoys using these techniques because they are comfortable for her. But more important, she feels their subtleness is beneficial to the student's self image.

During the selection of the study question, Teacher A had the opportunity to make classroom observations. She thought this was most beneficial. She found that all teachers deal with similar distractions. It gave her a chance to view some new ideas and coping techniques. It also reinforced many good things she was doing in her classroom. These observations gave her a more realistic perspective of teaching itself, and of her own teaching.

During data analysis, it was suggested by the observers that Teachers A and W would have benefited by visiting each other's rooms. Teacher A agreed it would have helped during the data analysis and writing stages. It was communicated by the teachers in the study that their primary and most important job was to teach, and they did not like being out of the room. Teacher A felt these observations could be kept at a minimum, and still be beneficial both for personal growth and for research purposes.

During the data analysis and writing stages, it became apparent that Level II teachers were not as committed to the study as Level I teachers. Many of the Level II teachers chose not to be as involved in the data analysis and writing as it had been anticipated by the Level I teachers. Teacher A feels this existed for a variety of reasons. Level I teachers had been involved with this study from the outset. They had written the format for the study. During the development stages, the Level I teachers developed a camaraderie and a mutual respect for each other and the research staff. This study was their "baby" and they wanted it to be professional and well done. Since Level II teachers became involved in this study only at the data collection stage, they did not feel the same enthusiasm, involvement, and interest. Possibly, the Level II teachers did not fully understand what their commitment entailed.

Teacher A also discovered that this study involved more work and time than she had anticipated. The study involved a lot of work, and had its share of frustrations and rewards. Teacher A would likely make such a commitment again because of her gains in professional growth which she attributes to this study. Realistically, though, she would have to consider

her other professional commitments. During the last three months of the study, she was involved in working on a master's degree. Her teaching position, master's program, and research study commitment left little room for anything else.

APPENDIX A

Distraction Classification

DISTRACTIONS TO CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

REGULARLY OCCURRING

STUDENT GENERATED

11. Students verbally interrupting the teacher
12. Student seeking clarification
13. Student-student interactions which are disruptive
14. General student noise
15. Students not concentrating on classroom activities (not on task)
16. Student's physical position or location
17. Student intentionally attempting to disrupt instruction or challenge rules
18. Physical disorders to the classroom environment or to students
19. Other

SCHOOL GENERATED

21. Sensory distractions
22. Student movement due to out-of-classroom activities/programs
23. Clarification of instruction needed by others (non-students)
24. School management-related activities
25. Teacher creates distraction
29. Other

OUT-OF-SCHOOL GENERATED

31. Pre-announced visitors
32. Special project-related activities (testing, recordkeeping)
39. Other

IRREGULAR OCCURRING

WITHIN CLASSROOM

41. Unexpected visitors
42. Communications to the teacher
43. Unexpected arrival or departure of students
44. Misc. student problems
49. Other

OUT-OF-CLASSROOM

51. Upset parent visit
52. Last moment activities (field trip, assembly, etc.)
53. Speakers
54. School photographs
55. Student elections
59. Other

DISTRACTIONS

REGULAR OCCURRING DISTRACTIONS

STUDENT GENERATED

11. *Student verbally interrupting the teacher*

    Students seeking approval
    Students telling of other students bothering them
    Students poking or touching teacher
    Misc. student questions (restroom, feeling ill, etc.)

12. *Student seeking clarification of task*

    Student asking teacher "how to do it"
    Raising and waving hands seeking help

13. *Student - student interactions which are disruptive*

    Student disagreements
    Unorderly sharing (lack of respect for other students while they are trying to share)
    Student discussions which are not related to the instructional task
    Students pushing, shoving, hitting, etc. each other

14. *General student noise*

15. *Students not concentrating on classroom activities (not on task)*

    Students not listening or following instructions (having to repeat instructions)
    Students do not have materials (which they should have -- e.g., pencil)
    General student foolishness and clowning around
    Students playfully running, crawling

16. *Student's physical position or location*

    Wandering students (wasting time)
    Student posture/seating
    Wiggling

17. *Student intentionally attempting to disrupt instruction*

    Student repeating instructions (disobediently -- seeking peer recognition)
    Students attempting to redirect class activities (move the teacher off the subject)

18. *Physical disorders to the classroom environment (e.g., spilt paint, student dragging earphones) or to students (e.g., wet pants, emotional tears, etc.*

19. *Other*

SCHOOL GENERATED

21. *Sensory distraction*

Bells
Fire drills
Gardening activities (noise and visual distractions)
Visual distractions of students or others passing by the classroom windows

22. *Student movement due to out-of-classroom activities/programs*

Media center and library visits
Pullout programs

23. *Clarification of instructions needed by others (non-student)*

Aides/parent volunteers seeking additional instructions or clarification
Teacher giving instructions to aide or parent (teacher initiated)

24. *School management-related activities*

Attendance folders
Assemblies
Preparation for open house

25. *Teacher creates distraction*

29. *Other*

OUT-OF-SCHOOL GENERATED

31. *Pre-announced visitors*

Parent visits
V.I.P visits (announced)

32. *Special project related activities (testing, recordkeeping)*

Recordkeeping for special funded projects
Special project testing

39. *Other*

IRREGULAR OCCURRING DISTRACTIONS

WITHIN CLASSROOM

41. *Unexpected visitors*

    Nurse visits and clinical testing
    Custodian delivery and pickup
    Principal visitation
    Important visitors (unannounced)

42. *Communication to the teacher*

    Notes and messages from other staff members
    Announcement of emergency meeting after school
    Requests (from principal or staff) for teacher to participate in an after school presentation (or a special presentation to a group)

43. *Unexpected arrival or departure of students*

    Family emergency (teacher or student)
    Receiving new students

44. *Misc. student problems*

    Students losing lunch tickets or money (or lunch)
    Inquiry to student on playground
    Sudden student illness (in class or playground)

49. *Other*

OUT-OF-CLASSROOM

51. *Upset parent*

52. *Last moment field trip*

53. *Speakers*

54. *Photographs*

55. *Student elections*

56. *Other*

APPENDIX B

Coping Technique Classification

COPING TECHNIQUES

ONGOING TEACHER ACTIONS		PREVENTATIVE AND/OR PREPLANNED
VERBAL	NONVERBAL	
11. Teacher giving direct command or instruction (telling)	21. Teacher using body language, gestures and/or facial expressions	31. Reminding students of rules to prevent distractions from happening
12. Teacher complimenting positive behaviors or actions -- as an example of acceptable activities	22. Teacher moving or locating self with the classroom	32. Locating material or arranging classroom environment to reduce/prevent distractions from happening
13. Teacher clarifying or reminding students of rules (How it should be)	23. Teacher physically redirecting students' attention	33. Teacher using positive reinforcement techniques to encourage future appropriate behavior/actions
14. Teacher soliciting students to a behavior change by using varying voice techniques	24. Teacher calling attention to inappropr'ate behavior (signs, bells, etc.)	34. Teacher using other adults in the classroom to cope with or to prevent distractions
15. Teacher using varying patterns or clues to gain student attention	25. Teacher ignoring distraction (after exhibiting awareness of the distraction)	35. Class discussion of events which are yet to occur or of non-functional events which were disrupted
16. Teacher directing student to another person or location	26. Teacher showing how a task is supposed to be done	36. Teacher using students to help resolve distractions
17. Teacher putting distraction on hold	27. Teacher physically resolves distraction ("fixes it")	39. Other
18. Teacher telling how a task can be accomplished	29. Other	54. Teacher giving direct command or instruction (telling) Teacher physically redirecting students' attention.
19. Other		55. Teacher giving direct command or instruction (telling) Teacher calling attention to inappropriate behavior (signs, bells, etc.)

COPING TECHNIQUES

ONGOING TEACHER ACTIONS

VERBAL

11. *Teacher giving direct command or instruction (telling)*

    Redirecting student's attention by calling his name or catching his attention
    Direct commands
    Calling for class attention (e.g., "all eyes up")
    Calling on an inattentive student

12. *Teacher complimenting positive behaviors or actions -- as an example of acceptable activities*

    Complimentary techniques (e.g., "Look how nice row 2 is ...")

13. *Teacher clarifying or reminding students of rules (how it should be)*

    Questioning technique (e.g., "Children, why am I not answering Johnny?"
    Making judgement of "what is fair" (clarifying existing classroom rules)
    Directing the students to raise their hands (if they wish to share or have a question)
    Reminding students of "rules"
    Threats (e.g., "If you don't ___, I will ___")

14. *Teacher soliciting behavior change by using varying voice techniques*

    Voice inflection (e.g., loud/soft, harsh/gentle)
    Hesitating or stopping in a sentence (or in the middle of a sentence) until students attention is regained -- [could be called a nonverbal technique]

15. *Teacher using varying patterns or clues to gain student attention*

    Verbal clues of teacher's mood or health (e.g., "Today I'm in a grouchy mood", "I've got a cold today")
    Requesting students to use a "calming technique" (e.g., "Take a slow deep breath", "Put your heads down")
    Motivating into appropriate actions ("Get to the rug by the time the song is over")
    Counting to bring the class to order (e.g., "I'm counting, 1,2,3, ...")
    Kidding - joking techniques (e.g., mimicking a whinning child)
    Reading to group (e.g., after recess to calm-down)
    Dismissal techniques (to lunch, recess, home)
    Management songs

16. *Teacher directing student to another person or location (verbal)*

Sending student out of classroom
Dismissal techniques (to lunch, recess, home)
Directing the student to another person (e.g., "go to the principal")
Directing the student to sit at another location (e.g., go sit in the corner")

17. *Teacher putting the distraction on "hold" (e.g., "Ill be there in a second")*

18. *Teacher telling how a task can be done (clarifying it)*

19. *Other*

NONVERBAL

21. *Teacher using body language, gestures and/or facial expressions*

Facial reactions
Descriptive gestures
Eye contact
Gestures
Signals - hand motions (e.g., "zipper lips")

22. *Teacher moving or locating self within the classroom*

Location of teacher (e.g., standing back, physically separate)
Teacher moving around the classroom ("making rounds")
- during large group instruction
- during transition periods

Position of teacher's body (back to wall, eyes toward class)

23. *Teacher physically redirecting students' attention*

Touching of students
Redefine students' attention by removing objects

24. *Teacher calling attention to inappropriate behavior*

Writing student names on board
Turning lights off
Ringing bells or other attention getters
Pausing or waiting techniques
Signs (e.g., Lucy sign "It's too noisy in here")

25. *Teacher ignoring distraction (after exhibiting awareness of the existence of the distraction)*

26. *Teacher showing how a task is supposed to be accomplished*

27. *Teacher physically resolves distraction (e.g., fixes it, does it herself, goes and gets the materials)*

29. *Other*

33. *Teacher using positive reinforcement techniques to encourage future appropriate behavior/actions*

Good citizenship awards for good behavior
Communication with parents (phone, notes, conferences) of acceptable and expected behavior

34. *Teacher using other adults in the classroom to cope with or prevent distractions*

Use aides to:
- Check students' work and correct problems
- Circulate to be sure students are on task
- Maintain records
- Filter "lower level" classroom/out-of-classroom distractions
- Working with individuals who are having learning problems
- Playground supervision
- Lunchtime supervision
- Communicate standards and rules to substitutes

35. *Class discussion of events which are yet to occur or of non-functional events which were disrupted*

Helping students anticipate what is going to happen (e.g., "Now when we go on the field trip, when we get on the bus . . .")
Asking a class to evaluate a non-functional experience (e.g., "Class, why do you think the classroom burned down today?")

39. *Other*

APPENDIX C

Quantitative Checklist

QUANTITATIVE CHECKLIST

EVENT#	TIME	GROUP	DISTRACTION	CODE	COPING TECHNIQUE	CODE	TIME OFF TASK: <5K(1) 2)<10K(2) 3)<30K(3) 4)<60K(4) 5)>60K(5)	FLOW OF INST.: 1 2 3 4 5	DUR. & EXTENT: 1 2 3	COMMENTS
									Distraction continues and the teacher uses another technique	
									Distraction continues at a reduced (acceptable) level	
									Apparent elimination of distraction	
									Instruction completely disrupted: very difficult to regain the group's attention	
									Distraction disrupted but teacher brings the group back to task	
									Minor distraction to both teacher and most students in the group	
									Distraction mainly to the teacher; doesn't bother the students	
									No apparent break in the instructional flow (distraction ignored)	
							Duration of the Distraction — (in seconds)			
							The time the teacher is taken off her intended task.			

APPENDIX D

Teachers Daily Log

APPENDIX D

TEACHER DAILY RESPONSE FORM

During your tape summary of your reading period for today, please respond to the questions below (in the order they are asked). Feel free to include additional factors and conditions which may be of assistance in clarifying the context of your reading instruction today. Please focus your remarks to the time interval when reading instruction was occurring.

1. General assessment of today's instructional experience (e.g. today everything went well because...) were you satisfied with how much of your plans you accomplished and why?

2. Description of classroom environmental conditions which may have affected reading instruction and/or distractions (e.g. weather, special events, etc.)

3. Today what was your most successful distraction/coping technique and why. (During reading)

4. Today what was your least successful distraction/coping technique and why. (During reading)

5. Were there any changes in your coping techniques today? Why?

6. Comment on your mood and physical condition for today.

7. Estimate how much time (in minutes) of your reading instruction was lost today due to distractions.

8. Look down the list of names of the students in your class. Comment on any event, which occurred outside the reading period, which might effect future reading instruction (e.g., teacher reminded student that field trip participation depended on good behavior).

9. Other comments.